

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 45

The Fragrance of the Plum Blossom

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller... than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: Extermination

The divine sword had pierced through all eight layers of clouds, and so Ji Ning and the others were able to see everything happening inside the Grassland World. They couldn't help but feel shocked by Iyerre's might. Bolin's avatar was newly created and fairly weak, but for it to be destroyed in just a single blow was insane.

"Bolin, was your avatar actually destroyed?" Autarch Ekong asked, "Even though you are in control of the Samsara Daobirth Essence, you still weren't able to escape?"

"It really was destroyed. Not even a scrap of energy was left," Bolin said.

If even just a shred of his energy had managed to escape, he would have 'survived'. This was much like how Bolin's true body had been almost completely exterminated, but he had managed to survive at the border between life and death thanks to the Samsara Daobirth Essence. That tiny shred of life had entered the 'false death' state and hidden itself. Given that Bolin had access to nigh-infinite amounts of energy, he was able to quickly and soundlessly heal himself.

However, when Iyerre had attacked his avatar didn't have any chance to escape at all.

"He's become even more powerful," Autarch Mogg said solemnly.

Ning nodded. "In this world of grass, his every strike is empowered by the blue energy of the surrounding area. He has indeed become more powerful here."

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"Neither dead nor alive... he's managed to cut off all karmic links?" Iyerre had sought to use karma to link his strike and use it to attack Bolin's true body, but it had been completely cut off from all karma and so the attack was unable to proceed.

"Damn." Iyerre was in a foul mood. His specialty lay in light. Karma? Life and death? He wasn't really skilled in either of these two Daos. As an

Omega Autarch his insights into the Dao of Life and Death surpassed Bolin's Samsara Daobirth Essence by just a hair.

As for destroying Bolin's avatar? It made no difference at all, because the avatar was a new one. To destroy a peak avatar that took many years to strengthen would've been a resounding success, but a new avatar... Autarch Bolin would be able to recreate it in a twinkling!

"If you won't come in, I'll come for you!" Iyerre reached out with both hands. Whoosh! Whoosh! One enormous violet-gold chain after another began to clatter, their very auras transforming as they soared into the heavens. They seemed to transform into inviolable parts of heaven and earth which nothing could sunder. Moments later, their bodies began to glow with white light, and as they lashed out against the giant black serpent they seemed to represent the punishment of the supreme heavens.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The fish-like sword-light in front of the black serpent sought to block for it, but the violet-gold chains cracked them all apart. There was no way to defend at all.

"Not good. These chains just became even more powerful, far more powerful than they were previously. Our Karmic Wurm isn't going to be able to withstand this." Ning and the others were all shocked.

Swoosh! The enormous sword quickly shrank in size as it flew closer towards the giant black serpent, seeking to reinforce it. Inside the giant black serpent were their avatars, after all, and some of those avatar were at peak strength. There was no way Ning and the others wished to lose them.

As the divine sword flew over to reinforce the snake, the snake quickly retreated and attempted to flee. However, five more violet-gold chains lashed out towards the giant sword.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Ning and the rest of the seven had poured tremendous power into the giant sword, giving it incredible strength, but the five violet-gold chains were just as tenacious. The worst part was, their movements now became incredibly profound as well! Ning's group clearly

had a slight advantage in power, but the sword was still unable to shake off those violet-gold chains!

This was due to the difference in depths of insight between them and Iyerre. It was much like how three of those Autarch-class void dwellers had encircled Bolin to no avail. Even if they truly had attacked Bolin with their full power, they wouldn't have been able to do anything to him. If your insights were lacking, you wouldn't be able to defeat your foe unless you had an absolute advantage in personal strength.

The giant sword had been tied down by five violet-gold chains! As for the remaining four, they simultaneously struck out to attack the giant black serpent.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Explosions rang out as they clashed again and again. The giant black serpent hurriedly fled while trying to defend as best it could, but the violet-gold chains were now being marvelously controlled by Iyerre and tremendously strengthened by the ignition of the world's quintessence core! Although Autarch Titanos was in control of the black serpent and the five avatars worked in harmony to defend, the defensive perimeter was still breached after just one round of blows.

Riiiiip. One of the serpentine heads was securely latched onto by a violet-gold chain, then physically ripped off!

Crack! Moments later, another serpentine head was delivered a furious blow from up high by a different violet-gold chain, and the force of the collision was so great that Autarch Ekong's avatar (located inside the head) was completely destroyed.

In the blink of an eye, the four violet-gold chains' furious attacks had caused the giant black serpent to completely collapse. All five avatars died in battle, with none being able to escape!

This caused Ning and the others to feel both sorrow and grief, but there was nothing they could do. It had all happened too quickly! As soon as Iyerre had returned, he had killed Bolin's avatar and then immediately used those nine violet-gold chains to launch a series of consecutive attacks. There had been no chance to flee at all!

The Grassland World was a vast place, while spacetime was suppressed here. The black serpent needed to slowly fly away if it wished to escape, but Iyerre wasn't going to give it the time needed. This was the exact reason why Ning and the others hadn't dared to risk their true bodies inside.

Going in would be easy. Coming out would be very difficult!

"Flee." The giant sword quickly fled backwards, while the nine violet-gold chains immediately swung to attack it. For a time, both sides appeared to be equal.

The giant sword was different from the black serpent. The sword had been formed from a complete merger of the energies of the seven Autarchs. This was far superior to the black serpent, which simply represented five Autarchs working together in harmony! The giant sword was a single whole and guided by Ning's Sword Dao. Every single strike of the sword was filled with tremendous power, making it impossible for the nine violet-gold chains to defeat it, much less destroy it.

A short moment later, the giant sword flew out from the grayish clouds and escaped from the Grassland World.

Iyerre raised his head, glaring. If he had poured in all of his power he would've been able to prevent that sword from escaping, but there was no point. That sword had simply consisted of energy and some Universe treasures. Ning and the others could've quickly forged more Universe treasures to replace them.

"I should keep my true killer attacks hidden until the very end. It isn't worth exposing it on just a few Universe treasures." Iyerre raised his head, staring at the formation-incarnation in the skies.

The incarnation was staring at Iyerre as well. Moments later, it waved its arm and then retreated from the clouds as well. Whoooosh! The gray clouds quickly closed over, allowing the Grassland World to grow calm again.

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The outside world. The great formation continued to cover the entire vast area surrounding the Grassland World.

Ji Ning, Titanos, Mogg, Bolin, Skyfeeder, Ekong, and Stonerule felt both sorrow and anger as they stared at the ovaloid Grassland World before them. Three of the five avatars they had just lost were peak-strength avatars, but they had been wiped out in just a twinkling. This taught them a lesson with regards to just how powerful Iyerre was once he joined together with the Grassland World.

In truth, Iyerre had carried the Grassland World with him in his mission to kill Ning. Alas, Ning managed to escape before he reached that temple! Thus, Iyerre had chosen to separate from his Grassland World and gone Autarch-hunting! Autarch Mogg had managed to survive thanks to his Golden Bridge of Freedom, while Autarch Bolin had nearly died while only barely surviving thanks to comprehending the Samsara Daobirth ESsence at the critical moment.

“Iyerre and the Grassland World combine to form a much more deadly opponent,” Titanos said.

“He has a far higher level of insight than us.” Stonerule slowly shook his head.

“So what if he does? We’ll kill anyone who dares to invade our Chaosverse, even if it costs us our very lives.” Autarch Stonerule gritted his teeth.

Right at this moment... boom! The ovaloid ‘Grassland World’ quickly shrank in size inside the formation. Moments later, a spacetime rift appeared next to it. Swoosh! It flew straight into the spacetime rift. This caused Ning and the others to feel their hearts lurch. They had suspected all along that their formations were unable to bind Iyerre, but seeing it with their own eyes was still rather demoralizing.

“Wait, he didn’t leave yet!” Ning and the others turned to stare at the rift which had just appeared outside the reach of their formation. The ovaloid Grassland World had actually just flown out there!

“Cultivator leaders, did you think that I had fled? No, no. How could I

flee?” Iyerre’s voice echoed throughout every inch of the void. “ Let’s see just how powerful your formations are.”

“BREAK!!!” Iyerre let out a furious shout, and those nine violet-gold chains suddenly appeared on the surface of the ovaloid object. The violet-gold chains expanded in size, each becoming a trillion kilometers in length as they swept through the void with ineffable majesty. With Iyerre in control of them and with the ignited quintessence strengthening them, they began to furiously smash down upon Ning’s enormous formation! Iyerre was able to immediately see the flaws in this formation and so his every attack was aimed at a weak spot.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The entire formation immediately began to shudder as a level of power comparable to the divine sword’s began to hammer down upon its various weak spots. This wasn’t a defensive formation; there was only so much punishment it could take!

“Let’s leave for now.” Ning and the others were all quite patient. All of them had prepared escape-type treasures, and they had also opened up a spacetime tunnel within the formation itself.

Whoosh! Ning and the others immediately flew into the spacetime corridor and departed.

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1. In China, the plum blossom symbolizes perseverance, hope, and beauty.

Chapter 2: Weakness, Hunt

Now that Ji Ning and the other Autarchs were no longer actively maintaining the grand formation which covered this region, it quickly crumbled beneath the strikes of the violet-golden chains.

A short while later, four figures emerged from the grayish clouds which constituted the surfaced of the ovaloid Grassland World. It was Iyerre and his three allies.

“They fled,” the silver-robed woman murmured softly. “Iyerre, this is their homeland. These cultivators can fight or flee as they please. If we aren’t able to trap them, we won’t be able to kill them at all.”

“They are all extremely wily. As soon as the odds turn against them, they immediately flee.” The red-robed man frowned as well.

“I agree with everything you two just said.” Iyerre nodded. Killing Ning and the Autarchs would be very difficult, because they all fled at the first sign of bad news! Iyerre was constantly being suppressed by this local Chaosverse, and so once they fled in unison he wouldn’t be able to chase them down.

He could suppress spacetime to make it impossible for them to flee, then warp through spacetime after them... but as he tried to warp close enough to do this, ripples would be generated. Once Ning and the others sensed this, they would instantly flee far away. Iyerre still wouldn’t be able to catch them.

The reason why he had been able to do this to Mogg was because he had gotten close enough to use something akin to a domain-field to prevent Mogg from escaping. Now that Ning and the others were all together and working in concert, Iyerre’s domain would no longer be able to bind them any longer.

In other words... neither speed, suppression of spacetime, nor domains would work. There was nothing which could actually trap Ning and the others. They could come and go as they pleased! It must be remembered that the native Autarchs were in no hurry to conclude the war right away.

The longer it dragged on for, the better. If it somehow dragged on for a few million chaos cycles, their Chaosverse would have given birth to another batch of experts that might include new Autarchs or Omega Emperors!

Now that the cultivators had the 'Truesoul Everlasting', the rate at which they produced Autarchs would naturally increase significantly.

"They are slippery and cautious. They won't give us a chance to catch them," Iyerre said. "Our plan was to use the sudden appearances of myself and the Grassland World to achieve dramatic successes, but in the end both failed. However... in the end, none of it matters. I've fully mapped out all possibilities for this entire war. They won't be able to escape their fate. In the end, we shall still win this war."

His three allies were rather puzzled. Such self-confidence... where did it stem from? If they couldn't even catch or hunt down their foes, how were they supposed to beat them?

"Let me repeat myself. I've fully mapped out ALL possibilities for this entire war," Iyerre said with a smile. "Have you forgotten that I sent out the Annihilation Hive at the very beginning of this war?"

"The Annihilation Hive?" The three were startled.

"Haven't the cultivators already discovered a way to counteract the Annihilation Hive? It's no longer functioning, right?" the silver-robed woman asked curiously.

"Imbecile." Iyerre glanced sideways at her. "I released the Annihilation Hive for two reasons. The first was on the off-chance that I might be able to gain total victory if it succeeded in devouring a great deal of this Chaosverse's energies and caused it to weaken enough for me to take over. This objective failed... but the second objective was the true objective."

"I sent it out to make it the most lethal weak point in this entire Chaosverse for the cultivators!" Iyerre's eyes flashed coldly. "Right now, a single one of their avatars is responsible for maintaining the formation that is tying down the Annihilation Hive. All we need to do is charge towards it and destroy the avatar inside the Annihilation Hive, at which

point it will start to function again!”

“The Annihilation Hive will once more begin to devour the energies from the Chaosverse, causing it to weaken! The cultivator leaders will be forced to try and stop us. They can’t just sit back and watch as their Chaosverse wastes away... which means that so long as we wait for them at the Annihilation Hive, they’ll be forced to come to us! They’ll obediently step into the battlefield we have prepared.” Iyerre smiled.

The silver-robed woman and the other two revealed looks of delight. They had thought that the Annihilation Hive was of no further use now that it had been counteracted. They hadn’t fully thought through all the other implications.

“Impressive. So long as the Annihilation Hive continues to function, the cultivators will be forced to come and assault it no matter how reluctant they may be. We don’t need to do anything at all. They’ll come to us!” the red-robed man chuckled.

“Let’s go wipe them out in the battlefield of our choosing,” the black-robed man said grimly.

“No rush.” Iyerre smiled. “A war must be carried out step-by-step. You might see an occasional setback, but if you fully planned for all possibilities then you’ll still end up the ultimate victor.”

“Right now, what we need to do is strengthen our forces! Let’s go rescue those trapped Exalts first,” Iyerre said.

Slash! Violet-gold chains began to fly out towards the still-trapped Nine Cicadas Temple. The sealing formation surrounding it was nothing more than a joke to Iyerre. A mere heartbeat later the seemingly-complicated formation had been completely undone, granting the nine Sithe Exalts freedom once more.

The nine Exalts immediately flew over. When they saw Iyerre standing atop the distant gray clouds, they hurriedly bowed: “Almighty Iyerre!”

“Come here. We shall head to the next location.” Iyerre nodded. The Sithe Exalts immediately put away the Nine Cicadas Temple and flew into

the Grassland World.

Moments later, the Grassland World once more tore through spacetime and vanished. As soon as it did, a group of figures suddenly appeared off in the distance. It was Ji Ning, Autarch Titanos, and the others. The seven of them hadn't fled too far through spacetime. They had quickly warped back in secret to scry this place from nearby.

Their movements didn't cause any disturbances, because they were protected rather than rejected by the Chaosverse. In fact, they were even able to borrow the Chaosverse's energies to 'watch' their opponents from afar!

It was Ning's primary responsibility to 'watch' them, as he was extremely skilled in spacetime and well-rounded in many other areas. Given that he was within his own Chaosverse, simply keeping watch on someone from afar was quite simple.

"We were ambushed by them previously. There's no way we're going to let them just disappear again. We have to keep tabs on their location at all times," Autarch Titanos said. "All of our avatars have been destroyed, which means we have no choice but to simply send our true bodies to carry out this task. Darknorth, for now we'll have to trouble you to carry this out as the rest of us work on remaking our avatars."

"Alright." Ning nodded. The others had all lost their avatars, while his was still in the Annihilation Hive and in peak condition.

Ning could still sense them from afar. He could follow the ripples generated by the Grassland World warping through spacetime and 'see' where it was heading.

Whoosh! Ning began to warp through spacetime with the other six in tow, maintaining a distance of roughly a realmverse from the Grassland World. To Ning, a realmverse of distance was nothing at all. His godsense alone vastly outstripped this, and when he relied upon the powers of the Chaosverse and his link to the prime essences he was able to 'watch' from an even more ridiculously great distance.

So long as the two sides maintained a distance of just a realmverse away,

Iyerre wouldn't be able to easily detect Ning thanks to the Chaosverse constantly suppressing his powers.

While Ning continued to pursue the Grassland World, Titanos and the others created their new avatars. These avatars merely had 50% of their true power, which was the best they could do on such short notice.

"Judging from the direction they are taking, they should be going to go rescue another temple," Ning sent.

"Then let us destroy it in advance," Autarch Titanos said. "Given our power, we are completely capable of working together to destroy the temples in a short period of time."

Previously, they hadn't considered the temples to be much of a threat. They didn't want to attack the temples and reveal the techniques they could use when fighting together, as this would give their opponents a chance to prepare for them in the future. The reveal had to be reserved for the Grassland World... and in the end, they had successfully destroyed one of the conduit formations and forced the ignition of its quintessence core!

"Let's keep following the Grassland World. Whenever it tries to rescue a temple, we'll fly up ahead and destroy that temple," Autarch Ekong said with a cold smile. "We warp through spacetime far faster than that thing does."

Ning and the others held a significant advantage in both flying speed and warping speed. Even Iyerre was able to just barely meet Autarch standards of speed in warping through spacetime, but of course this was because he was being heavily suppressed by the local Chaosverse.

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The cultivators spent nearly a month travelling at high speed. In about six or so days, the Grassland World would reach a new temple.

"Skyfeeder, Mogg, the two of you should have your avatars continue to track the Grassland World's movements. Make sure you know where it is at all times. Don't lose sight of it!" Out of an abundance of caution, Autarch Titanos gave this task to Skyfeeder and Mogg. The two of them

were skilled in time and space, respectively. “The rest of us will head out and move towards the nearest temple at maximum speed and use all our power to destroy it.”

“Alright.” The avatars of Mogg and Skyfeeder were both extremely confident.

Chapter 3: Skycleaver Stance

A great star-like temple was silently floating within the Great Dark, surrounded by formations and flowing barriers that surrounded it and kept it completely sealed away.

Riiiiip. A rift in the darkness appeared, followed by Ji Ning and the rest of the seven emerging from within it.

“Let’s begin.” Ning, Titanos, and the others exchanged smiling glances.

“This will be the first time we have the Sword Titan release its full power in battle,” Ning said with a laugh. All of them began to pour energy into the formation-bases they were holding. Boom! They quickly summoned the awesome power of the Chaosverse, which began to swiftly condense into the form of a nearly nude giant who was clad in just a fur loincloth. This titan stood there in the Great Darkness, his long dark hair spilling across his shoulders.

He had two arms and a face which looked similar to Ning’s but had more of the cold, pure remorselessness of the Dao of the Sword.

The Sword Titan had two different ‘modes’. The first mode was the seven-faced, fourteen-armed mode they had used previously. This mode used up more energy but it had so much power that the other six Autarchs could each be responsible for controlling two arms as well.

The second mode was this mode. It had just a single face and two arms.

Ning and the others had already concluded that they would have to fight together during the final battle. If they had enough time, they would of course set up formations to prepare the battlefield. Before the battle near the Nine Cicadas Temple, they had actually spent nearly a month setting up that grand formation (the ‘real’ time they spent was 100x as much). However, oftentimes battles would break out suddenly and without warning, giving you no chance to slowly establish the formations you needed.

During such times, they would need to make use of mobile formations

they could carry with them. They would have to shrink the size of the formation while preserving as much of its power as possible... and so they developed the 'second mode' of the Sword Titan!

The second mode was activated by the various formation-bases which Ning and the others carried with them at all times. It allowed them to summon the power of the Chaosverse and then materialize this body. Given that it had access to less power, they had to be a bit more sparing with their energy usage and so they only kept the two strongest arms which Ning controlled.

The two arms which Ning was in control of was where most of the power of the entire Sword Titan was concentrated. More than 90% of the power was there!

"Gentlemen, let us use the Skycleaver stance in cracking this temple," Ning said.

"Alright." The other six understood and agreed.

Rumble... the loincloth-clad Sword Titan strode through the void, a longsword appearing within one of its hands. This was one of Ning's Northbow swords.

Autarch Titanos, Autarch Skyfeeder, Autarch Mogg, Autarch Stonerule, Autarch Ekong, and Autarch Bolin were inside the Sword Titan. They immediately unleashed their various techniques, filling the Sword Titan's body with their six roaring streams of energy. Under Ning's guidance, all of the different energies merged perfectly into the Omega Sword Dao, allowing the Sword Titan to unleash the most powerful of its many fusion attacks – the Skycleaver stance!

Whoosh! The Sword Titan's two hands came together to grasp the Northbow sword in a double grip, then lifted it high into the air. A heartbeat later, it brought the Northbow sword down in an utterly indomitable chop towards the trapped astral temple before them.

Boom! Crack! The entire astral temple began to shudder. This strike destroyed three of the six formations protecting it, and even the remaining three formations were shuddering as explosions rang out across the

temple.

“What in the world is happening outside?”

“Didn’t almighty Iyerre say that he’s about to arrive and save us? Why are our formations collapsing?!” The seven Sithe Exalts inside all felt quite terrified, but the formations sealing them in here prevented them from seeing what was happening outside. All they could sense was that just now, an incomparably sharp power had come crashing down upon them and had nearly blasted the entire temple apart.

“Kill!” The Sword Titan delivered a second chop, then a third chop. Every single blow was filled with utterly terrifying power.

The reason why these two arms were the ‘strongest’ arms was precisely because these were the arms which Ning was in control of. The other six Autarchs worked together to unleash their Daos, while Ning guided the power of their Daos into ‘his’ two arms to unleash the most powerful of attacks. If they were in the ‘first mode’ with fourteen arms, the other Autarchs would individually control the other twelve arms. However, they were unable to make perfect use of their colleagues’ energies. They were only able to mobilize a fraction of it.

In other words, those twelve arms combined weren’t nearly as strong as the two arms which Ning controlled. Thus, even when the Sword Titan was at ‘peak’ power, more than 90% of its strength came from these two ‘primary’ arms!

Boom! Boom! Boom!

“Quick, go into lockdown mode!”

“Completely seal the temple off from outside attacks!” The Sithe Exalts within the temple were panicking like mad. The formations had already been disposed of. Now, their only choice was to try and use the natural sturdiness of the temple itself to defend against these attacks.

Ning’s Sword Titan did not elect to blink inside the temple. Instead, the sword Titan continued to launch frenzied blows from outside using the Skycleaver stance! Every single strike contained the full power from seven

Autarch-class combatants which had been perfectly fused together via the Eternal Omega Sword Dao.

This was a level of power that far surpassed that of the 'giant sword' and the 'black serpent' which had fought in the Grassland World, and it was also mightier than the violet-gold chains.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The temple was even sturdier than Universe weapons, but after nearly a hundred blows it finally began to crumble. Moments later it completely blew apart, with the Sithe Exalts inside being reduced to dust by the leftover power from the final Skycleaver stance. This was as to be expected – even the Autarchs, the creators of the Skycleaver stance, would've been destroyed in one blow from this overwhelmingly powerful fusion attack.

"That felt incredible! Unleashing the full power of the Sword Titan was a wonderful feeling." The Sword Titan broke apart, revealing the figures of the seven. Autarch Ekong was particularly excited by what they had just done.

"It's been a long time since I've had that much fun. The Skycleaver stance truly is astonishingly powerful," Autarch Titanos said with a smile.

"In my opinion, all the various techniques and trump cards we have accumulated over the aeons should make it so that we are entirely capable of fighting the Grassland World head-on," Autarch Ekong said. "Last time, we retreated before we really had a chance to test ourselves. That was irritating! I think we were entirely capable of winning if we fought them head-on."

Ning shook his head. "Don't underestimate the Sithe."

"Darknorth is right. There's no need for us to risk ourselves like that. The longer we can delay the final battle, the greater our advantage shall be. We need to slowly bide our time and allow our natural advantage to accumulate into an overwhelming one. You need patience to win a war," Autarch Titanos said. "We don't need to be anxious. It is the Sithe, it is Iyerre, who need to be anxious!"

Both sides were led by wily old bastards who had been alive for

unfathomable ages. Both had plenty of patience. Iyerre, for example, had made preparations for all possibilities. Even though he had encountered repeated setbacks, he felt certain that it wouldn't impact the grand scheme of things. He knew that victory would be his.

The cultivators, in turn, knew what their own advantages and disadvantages were. If they could make maximum use of their advantages, they'll gain victory in the end.

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"Eh?" Iyerre was seated in the lotus position on the grass within the Grassland World, which was hurtling through spacetime. Suddenly, his face tightened. He could sense that the auras of the seven Sithe Exalts he had been planning to rescue had suddenly vanished.

"Dead?" Iyerre frowned. "Did the cultivators somehow predict that we were going to go rescue them and so moved ahead of us to destroy the temple and kill the Exalts?"

He began to feel rather suspicious. "Let's head in another direction." Iyerre immediately sent the Grassland World to move towards a different temple, the Six Seals Temple.

Half a month went past. Iyerre had yet to reach the Six Seals Temple, but he could sense that it had also been destroyed. This caused his face to darken.

After another half-month, the final remaining temple was also destroyed, with the six Sithe Exalts within being slaughtered.

"Damn. This Chaosverse continues to suppress us, making it so that we cannot warp through spacetime as fast as those weak natives. In fact... are they perhaps following us in secret?" Iyerre was quite irritated, but there was nothing he could do. He was at an environmental disadvantage here. "Fine then. The Exalts didn't make too much of a difference. We shall still win without them."

"Hear my orders." Iyerre's voice suddenly echoed throughout the entire Grassland World. His three colleagues, the Autarch-class void dwellers, and

the Exalts including Bowenya all heard his voice.

“We are heading to the Annihilation Hive right away! The cultivators must fight us, which means they must engage us in battle. There’s no way for them to avoid this! They’ll have to battle us to the end... which means that this is the last battle. If we win, we’ll have achieved victory and I, Iyerre, promise to give you everything you desire. If we lose, none of you will survive.” Iyerre’s face was cold and calm, and his voice was very peaceful as well, but his subordinates all shivered when they heard it.

Whoosh! The Grassland World suddenly changed directions once more, moving towards the Annihilation Hive!

It was possible that the cultivators were secretly following them from behind, but Iyerre didn’t care. He was going to head straight towards his target openly. The cultivators might know what he was doing, but it wouldn’t matter. They would still have to come and fight him!

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The avatars of Autarch Skyfeeder and Autarch Mogg were charged with following the Grassland World. After following its new trajectory for over half a day, they were able to realize where the Grassland World was now headed.

“The Annihilation Hive?” The two avatars traded a glance in the darkness. Both of them understood what the Sithe were planning, and they couldn’t help but turn pale.

Chapter 4: Within the Annihilation Hive

“The Sithe are heading for the Annihilation Hive?” Ji Ning, Titanos, Mogg, Skyfeeder, Stonerule, Bolin, and Ekong fell silent. They stood there within the Great Dark, staring at each other.

Titanos said in a low voice, “I imagine you all know what their plan is. They are going to go to the Annihilation Hive and destroy Darknorth’s avatar! That will allow the Annihilation Hive to continue devouring power from our Chaosverse. We have to fight them there. We can’t let it just continue to weaken our Chaosverse unabated. Yes... we have no other options.”

“We do have another option!” Hard light flashed through Autarch Ekong’s eyes. “We’re faster than them. Let’s get to the Annihilation Hive first and destroy its quintessence core!”

“Destroy the sphere of annihilation?” The others were all intrigued.

“Is it possible?” Autarch Titanos looked at Ning. Ning knew more about it than anyone else present.

“The quintessence of the Annihilation Hive holds the mysteries of a type of destruction which I have named ‘Oblivion’ within it. It is incomparably profound and also tremendously powerful. I’m not even close to being strong enough to destroy it,” Ning said. “However... when we work together, we are also tremendously powerful. Perhaps we might just manage to destroy it after all.”

“We have to! Once we destroy the sphere of annihilation, they’ll have nothing to threaten us with,” Autarch Ekong said eagerly.

“Destroy the sphere of annihilation.”

“When we join forces, we are virtually unstoppable. We were able to crush entire temples in head-on attacks. I refuse to believe we can’t crack that thing!” Autarch Bolin’s eyes were filled with malevolence as well.

None of them wanted to be led around by the nose by their foes!

However, they all knew that it was uncertain as to whether or not they

would be able to damage the 'sphere of annihilation'. It was a completely foreign object that they knew nothing about... but they had to make the attempt! If they succeeded, they'd celebrate. If they failed, then they would have to go stop the Sith!

"I hope this works." Ning looked at his six comrades, silently praying to himself as he did. His avatar had been analyzing the sphere of annihilation for many years, and the more he understood the more nervous he felt.

"Come. Let us go to the Annihilation Hive!" They immediately began to speed towards the Annihilation Hive at maximum speed.

Roughly one month later, they finally reached the Annihilation Hive. Iyerre's team was still far away; they'd probably need over half a month before they would arrive.

"The Annihilation Hive." The seven of them stood shoulder-to-shoulder, staring at the great hive before them. It remained vast beyond measure, but the sucking power from it was now much weaker than when it was at full power. It was still able to destroy the raw darkness in the area around it, but the energies released by the destroyed darkness all returned to the prime essences of the Chaosverse. There was no way to steal them away at all.

"Let's try and see if we can destroy the entire thing first," Autarch Titanos said. "If we can, we don't need to worry about destroying the sphere of annihilation."

The sphere of annihilation, by itself, didn't have the power to forcibly take energy from an entire Chaosverse. It was all thanks to the formation supporting it that made this possible.

"Darknorth." Bolin looked at Ning.

"Let's try using the Skycleaver stance with full power," Ning said. The Skycleaver stance wasn't necessarily the best technique to use in actual combat, but it was definitely the best for causing destruction.

Soon, the towering, loincloth-clad Sword Titan once more appeared

within the emptiness of space. He strode towards the behemoth hive, glowing with pure sword-intent. Every single movement he made radiated power and destruction, and he quickly reached the surface of the behemoth hive. He then drew an enormous sword with his right hand.

“Skycleaver stance!” The Sword Titan held the sword in a two-handed grip, lifting it up high over his head. The six Autarchs began to use their various techniques, allowing Ning to guide their different Daos to merge together and unleash the Skycleaver stance! This was actually just one stance of an entire set of sword-arts which Ning had created for them.

Boom! The divine sword came crashing down, shattering spacetime and splintering the Five Elements. It destroyed all in its path as it came crashing down with absolutely terrifying power towards the surface of the Annihilation Hive.

Boom! A massive explosion occurred, causing even the enormous behemoth hive to tremble. As for Ning’s Sword Titan? A powerful counter-force pushed back against him, sending it stumbling a few steps backwards in space.

It was simply too powerful. Not even Ning’s Sword Dao was able to completely deflect this counter-force, and so the Sword Titan had to endure much of it.

“How does it look? Any cracks?”

“Did we cause any damage to it?” Ning and the others carefully inspected the behemoth hive while asking each other the same question. They were all hoping that the thing had been at least slightly damaged. Even the tiniest of cracks would symbolize that if they continued to hammer away at it, they would be able to completely destroy it in time. Alas, none of them could discover any cracks at all, which was why they were all asking the others if they saw anything.

“Nothing.”

“I can’t find any. I don’t see any damage at all.” Their hearts all began to sink.

“Let’s try a few more attacks and see if that does anything,” Autarch Titanos said.

“Alright.” Ning and the others nodded. They once more joined forces, having the Sword Titan raise its sword up high for the Skycleaver stance once more.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The Sword Titan delivered the terrifying Skycleaver stance again and again, furiously smoting the Annihilation Hive and causing it to shudder and even fly backwards.

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Deep within a three-hundred meter hidden space inside the Annihilation Hive, there was a formation-base with a long-haired man seated in the lotus position atop it. The long-haired man’s hair was half black and half white, and he was nervously keeping track of the hive’s status.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Every single explosion caused the entire Annihilation Hive to shudder.

“Who is attacking the Annihilation Hive from outside?” Exalt Anitya was rather startled and nervous. He was only able to see what was happening within the hive; he was unable to see the outside world. “The entire Annihilation Hive is actually trembling. This level of power far surpasses what Emperor Darknorth can accomplish. Can it be that the cultivator leaders have joined forces?”

Exalt Anitya was rather nervous, but a short while later the attacks came to a halt.

“They dealt over a thousand strikes, but they weren’t able to even scratch the Annihilation Hive.” Exalt Anitya let out a sigh of relief. The Annihilation Hive was one of the most important Sithe trump cards, and it had been just as expensive to create as the Grassland World. It was far more powerful than the various temples. It wouldn’t be easy to destroy it!

“Hm. Outsiders have just come inside.” Exalt Anitya stared at the images which appeared before him. They displayed a stream of power that flew

inside the hive and towards its core hive. The light and power surrounding the figure was so blinding that Exalt Anitya was unable to see who it was.

“I have to report this.” Exalt Anitya immediately contacted Iyerre. The formation-base below him slowly began to swivel as a pillar of light appeared. A figure appeared within the pillar of light which solidified into the seated form of Iyerre.

Exalt Anitya rose and bowed respectfully: “Almighty Iyerre, new invaders have entered the Annihilation Hive. They tried to assault the hive from outside, and they attacked over a thousand times with shocking levels of power. However, they still weren’t able to even scratch the Annihilation Hive!”

“Mm.” Iyerre’s eyes flashed coldly. “Someone actually dared to assault the Annihilation Hive? It must have been those cultivator leaders working together.”

“They are moving closer and closer towards the core. They’ll reach the sphere of annihilation soon. Will they be able to destroy it?” Exalt Anitya was worried.

“Just keep watching. Don’t take any other action,” Iyerre said.

“Alright,” Exalt Anitya said respectfully.

Whoosh. The pillar of light vanished.

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Within the behemoth hive. Ning and the other Autarchs had already reached the black pyramid located at the center of the vortex of astral clouds, reuniting with Ning’s avatar.

“So this is the sphere of annihilation?” Autarch Ekong stared at the nearby shadowy black orb, which continued to devour everything surrounding it. It was like an endless hole that swallowed and destroyed all things! It embodied the essence of ‘Oblivion’, causing the Autarchs to feel a sense of trepidation when they looked at it.

“What type of profound mysteries does this thing hold, for it to be able

to destroy all things? It seems as though there is nothing whatsoever which surpasses it,” Autarch Stonerule said softly.

They had attuned to many different Daos before, but the mysteries embodied by this sphere of annihilation were more profound than any they had ever studied. It eclipsed all Daos they had seen. The so-called ‘Omega Daos’ and ‘Daobirth Essences’... they would all be devoured and destroyed by this power of ‘Oblivion’.

“My avatar has been meditating here for many years and is able to replicate a bit of Oblivion’s power.” Ning shook his head. “But I still do not understand its true nature.”

“My Destruction Daobirth Essence is shallow and crude in comparison,” Autarch Ekong sighed.

“Iyerre might be at the same level of insight as this ‘Oblivion’ Dao,” Autarch Mogg said. “But maybe not. He’s so far above us that we cannot judge him accurately.”

Omega Autarchs had extremely profound levels of insight, perhaps as profound as the mysteries of Oblivion. Both were far beyond the likes of these seven to comprehend.

“In the end, it is simply a naturally-occurring quintessence core. It’s unable to fight back against us. The seven of us, when working together, can summon the power of the Chaosverse itself. We should be able to destroy it,” Autarch Ekong said.

Chapter 5: Laughter

Ji Ning and the rest of the seven stared at the shadowy black orb. There was utter stillness. Even their auras seemed to have frozen. All of them had experienced countless things as they had ascended the path of cultivation to reach their current heights, but they now felt a sense of tremendous pressure.

This sphere of annihilation was an inimical threat to their entire Chaosverse. If they could destroy it then things would be much simpler... but if they failed, they would have no choice but to begin the final, deadly battle.

The seven of them exchanged a glance, nodding silently to each other. They were out of options. They had already tried to destroy both the behemoth hive and the black tower, but they were unable to do so! Now, their last chance lay in attacking the 'sphere of annihilation' at the center of the tower.

Rumble... an awesome amount of the Dao's power was being gathered here, with Ning and the rest of the seven guiding it to form the towering, loincloth-clad titan. They simply didn't have enough time to set up the full formation, as the Sithe would be arriving in nearly half a month. Using the second mode of the Sword Titan was the best they could do.

"Destroy the sphere of annihilation!" The Sword Titan strode through the air, a greatsword appearing within his hands.

"Attack!" Ning ordered. Within the Sword Titan, the six Autarchs immediately began to unleash their most powerful attacks. Six massive streams of energy quickly began to course through the Sword Titan's body, then slowly began to coalesce into one. The Sword Titan lifted up its arms, double-gripping a massive greatsword and then delivering a furious blow towards the shadowy orb before it.

As the sword chopped out, it destroyed all the different types of energy that were in its path, reducing them to nothingness. This was the Skycleaver stance!

“It has to break.” Ning and the rest of the six watched hopefully.

BOOM! The sword smote furiously upon the shadowy orb, which instantly began to twist and distort. The power of this sword was simply too great! The orb was distorted, transforming from being a perfectly round globe into an ovaloid shape. Some cracks actually began to appear at its edges as the sword slashed right through it.

“Did we succeed?” When Ning and the others saw the black orb elongate and crack, they couldn’t help but feel a sense of wild excitement. But then... their hearts turned cold. The shadowy black orb once more returned to its normal spherical shape, continuing to devour everything around it while the cracks went back to normal.

“Try again!” Autarch Titanos commanded desperately.

“Again!” Ning gritted his teeth. He truly didn’t wish to admit defeat!

Boom! Boom! Boom! The Sword Titan began to strike again and again against the shadowy black orb, each strike filled with such incredible power that the black orb repeatedly cracked apart... but each time, it quickly healed afterwards and then continued to devour away at its surroundings. It wasn’t weakened in the slightest.

After striking several thousand times, Ning and the others finally gave up. Their hearts were ice-cold. The Sword Titan vanished, revealing the bodies of Ning and the other six. They all stared silently at the shadowy black orb.

A long silence ensued. Suddenly, Ning spoke out: “We haven’t failed yet.”

“Eh?” The other six looked at Ning. They had already attacked with all their might. Could it be that Daolord Darknorth had another suggestion?

“Bolin... ever since you mastered the Samsara Daobirth Essence, I’ve been ruminating on creating a new sword-art,” Ning said. “When we came together to form the Sword Titan, the Skycleaver stance we used was based off a sword-art I created which was meant to use the Space Daobirth Essence, Time Daobirth Essence, Claw Daobirth Essence, Illusion Daobirth Essence, Destruction Daobirth Essence, and Karma Daobirth Essence!”

“It employs six types of Daobirth Essences... but now, brother Bolin, you have also mastered the Samsara Daobirth Essence. I think I can create an even more powerful set of sword-arts which employs seven different Daobirth Essences, which would make our Sword Titan even more powerful.”

Titanos, Bolin, and the others were all delighted by this. Right! Their sword-art was based off of using six Daobirth Essences. There was no reason why they couldn't upgrade it to use seven instead!

“I already have the rough outline of this sword-art in my mind,” Ning said, “But I've still been in the process of perfecting it. Give me enough time to finish it and make it even more powerful!”

“Alright.”

“I'll accelerate time for you.”

“Take it at your own pace, Darknorth. Don't try to rush. We still have more than half a month.”

Titanos and the others instantly worked to assist him. If he was able to create a new sword-art, even if it wasn't enough to destroy the sphere of annihilation it would still strengthen their Sword Titan and make it more formidable during the battle to come.

Autarch Skyfeeder took over the responsibility for accelerating time, letting Ning calmly set his mind upon perfecting this sword-art. Ning himself had long ago mastered the Samsara Sword Dao. All he had to do was to link it to Bolin's Daobirth Essence, which was fairly easy. However, what Ning was trying to do was to perfect this technique and make it even more powerful! He actually had Titanos and the others try the new stance out, then went back to continue working at it.

Time flowed on, one day after another. The power of this new fusion sword-art grew increasingly mighty. Meanwhile, the avatars of Mogg and Skyfeeder continued to follow Iyerre's Grassland World, ready to report anything that needed reporting.

“You still have two more days before Iyerre's world of grass arrives

here,” Mogg said.

“I’ve already completed the sword-art.” Ning nodded. “I won’t be able to make any improvements unless I’m given another ten thousand years.”

There were a total of four stances to this fusion sword-art! Their names remained unchanged: Skycleaver stance, Brightcave stance, Dawnmoon stance, and World stance.

“Now that my Omega Sword Dao is guiding seven different types of Daobirth Essences when using this sword-art, the power has increased by nearly 30% compared to before,” Ning said. Titanos and the others were delighted to hear this. Given how powerful the Sword Titan was, increasing its power by even a tiny bit was extremely difficult. A 30% increase was absolutely incredible! This was primarily due to the fact that the Samsara Daobirth Essence was an extremely powerful Daobirth Essence to begin with, one which empowered the new sword-art tremendously.

“Let us begin.” The seven exchanged glances, then stared at the distant shadowy orb. They activated the various formation-bases they were carrying, summoning the power of the Chaosverse and converting it to form the loincloth-clad Sword Titan. The Sword Titan hefted a greatsword, once more preparing to unleash its supremely powerful Skycleaver stance! This time, of course, it was the new version of the Skycleaver stance.

Seven different streams of Daobirth Essence power coursed through the Sword Titan. Ning was able to easily unite the seven streams into a single whole, forming his Omega Sword Dao with their powers.

“Skycleaver stance.”

The Sword Titan once more chopped down at the shadowy orb, but this time it was noticeably more powerful than before. Boom! Boom! Boom! The divine sword plunged deep into the shadowy orb, causing a series of explosions to ring out. The black orb began to crack and shatter in many different places as the sword went into the orb and out the other side.

The black orb looked heavily damaged, but some invisible law once more pulled it back together. It quickly returned to its normal shape and began

to once more calmly devour everything around it.

“Still no permanent damage?” Ning could hardly believe his eyes. They launched another hundred strikes, but the result was the same. Each time, the black orb looked as though it was so heavily damaged that it would most assuredly break apart, but instead it would quickly heal. It was like a globe of water. No matter how much ‘damage’ they caused to it, it would easily reform into a globe once more.

The Sword Titan vanished. Ning and the other six stared at the black orb in disbelief.

“Damn,” Ning muttered, gritting his teeth.

“Hahaha! Oh well.” Autarch Ekong actually began to laugh loudly, a frenzied look in his eyes. “I’ve wanted to have a good fight against the Sithe for ages now. We have so many tools at our disposal, but we’ve never dared to take on the risk of actually using them because we’re afraid to lose. Now? Now, we have no way out. They’ve forced us to stand and fight! Good. Let’s fight then! We’ll risk it all in this battle. I want to see who will be the survivors – the Sithe, or us!”

“Ekong’s right. Discard all your fears and all your worries and pour everything you have into the next battle.” The wily old Autarch Titanos began to laugh loudly as well. “I’ve been alive for far too long. I’ve almost forgotten what life used to be like when I was a weak young cultivator who had to experience one life-threatening challenge after another. It has been a long time since I’ve had this sort of feeling where my very true soul is shivering in anticipation. Let’s do our best and fight them to the bitter end!”

Ning joined in their laughter, as did Skyfeeder, Bolin, Mogg, and Stonerule. Hah! If there was no way out, they would fight. They’d literally fight the Sithe to the death in this next battle!

“Gentlemen. It is my honor to be able to battle with you to the bitter end,” the only female Autarch, Autarch Skyfeeder, said with a smile.

Chapter 6: The Final Battle

“My friends, I can’t even describe how happy I am to be able to fight alongside all of you in this battle,” Autarch Bolin said with a smile.

“We’ll fight to the bitter end together.”

“Haha...”

“Come, come! I think we need to share some wine before this battle begins.” Autarch Ekong waved his hand, causing an estate to appear before him which was filled with stone tables and chairs. Ji Ning and the others all smiled as they sat down.

Ning picked up his wine cup, then glanced at his six friends. He felt as though this was almost a dream. He could still clearly remember how he had been reborn from the Netherworld Kingdom into the Ji clan of the Grand Xia, and how he had slowly trained step-by-step until he had reached the apex of the cultivator world. Now, he would stand alongside his six friends and peers, entering into a lethal battle by their sides. This was a battle which would determine the fate of all cultivators!

If they lost, it would all be for nothing. His friends, his family, and all of civilization would be destined to die.

“Y’know, I was thinking. Darknorth... should we have your true body stay out of this final battle?” Autarch Titanos suddenly said. All of the other Autarchs nearby were stunned.

“Not take part?” Ning was stunned as well. “Titanos... are you saying, the rest of you would fight but I wouldn’t?”

“Your avatar could,” Autarch Titanos said slowly. “Here’s what I’m thinking. We could have your avatar form the Sword Titan with us. Your avatar has 80% of your true power! You are already the strongest of us seven. Your avatar is more than strong enough to merge our powers together. I wager it’ll still be able to keep the Sword Titan at 90% of its full strength.”

“If we lose, at least your true body would still be alive! So long as you are

alive, our civilizations will have a chance to eventually recover.” Autarch Titanos looked at Ning. The other five began to hesitate, considering his words.

“If my true body doesn’t get involved in this fight, it’ll have a major impact on our combat prowess,” Ning said. “Both my avatar and myself will take part in this fight, guiding the six of you in forming the Sword Titan! If my avatar guides your avatars in forming a giant, it’ll have roughly 50% to 60% of the the strength of the main one.”

“We’ll have one Sword Titan and one Avatar Titan. That way, we’ll be able to unleash the maximum amount of power possible. If my true body doesn’t take part, we’ll only have a single weakened Sword Titan,” Ning said.

The Avatar Titan would be using the same type of formation. The other six avatars were only at half power while Ning’s avatar was at 80% power, but the Avatar Titan would remain a powerful tool in this fight. It would be even stronger than the giant sword they had used in the Grassland World.

“But if we lose, we’ll have lost all hope,” Titanos said hesitantly.

“Brother Titanos!” Ning said sharply, “Are you still thinking about a ‘backup plan’ at a time like this? Do you really think that I can reverse the situation all by myself if I’m the only one to survive? Even if I do eventually become an Omega Autarch, by then I would’ve had to watch as the Sithe bound our Chaosverse and Iyerre became a Chaoslord. In the end, I would still die!”

“We should put everything we have into this fight instead! We’ll use both the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan to maximize our chances.” Ning stared at Autarch Titanos.

“Titanos, I agree with Darknorth. This time, screw the backup plans,” Autarch Ekong said.

“Let’s fight.” Autarch Skyfeeder was by nature a fearless woman. She had previously been planning to attempt to bind the Chaosverse, even though the others who had tried all died!

“I agree that we should do everything we can to win this battle.” Autarch Bolin, Autarch Mogg, and Autarch Stonerule all turned to look at Titanos.

At their level, life and death mattered very little. They actually approved of Ning throwing himself into danger, because they had to consider what was good for the whole of civilization. They wanted to live... but they didn't want to live a life that was worse than death! They didn't fear death... so long as their deaths were meaningful!

Autarch Titanos hesitated a moment, swayed by the rebukes of his six colleagues. He then let out a self-mocking chuckle: “All my life, I've laid schemes upon schemes and have always had a backup plan ready. All of you are right. Even if Darknorth survives by himself, the chance of him being able to reverse a defeat here is minuscule. Him leaving would lower the strength of our forces. It's better for us to fight them to the bitter end.”

“That's more like it! How miserable would I feel, watching you all perish while I survived by myself?” Ning lifted up his tankard of wine and poured a cup for Titanos. “Come, Titanos, come! I'm going to punish you with some wine.”

“I accept, I accept.” Titanos immediately took the wine cup.

The seven had already decided to do their utmost in this upcoming battle. They no longer felt any worries, and so they happily drank together while awaiting Iyerre's arrival.

“Iyerre will be arriving in two hours,” Autarch Mogg said suddenly.

“We still have two hours left?” Ning and the others exchanged glances.

“Let's go out and get ready to welcome these outsiders.” Titanos rose to his feet, as did Ning and the others.

Whoosh! They all put away their respective estates and flew out together, blinking out of the black tower. This time, Ning brought his avatar out alongside him. The Annihilation Hive once more exploded with power and began to generate that incredible sucking pour, but the Sword Titan formed from the seven Autarchs was able to easily pass out of it.

Rumble... the Annihilation Hive began to furiously devour the energies

of the outside world at its previous pace as a vortex once more appeared around it. Ning and the Autarchs, however, simply ignored it. Although it was a formidable weapon, it needed to devour energy for an extremely long period of time to do real damage. A few weeks wouldn't make much of a difference. Not even a century would have a real impact.

Thus, for now they would ignore the Annihilation Hive and focus their efforts on the Sithe. Neither side was going to shirk away from this battle! Victory or defeat would be determined very soon. The winner would rule this Chaosverse. The loser would never be able to rise again.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Two figures suddenly warped over to them. It was the avatars of Autarch Mogg and Autarch Skyfeeder.

"All our avatars are here. We're ready to fight now. A pity that we lost one of the Golden Bridges of Freedom. Otherwise, we'd be at absolute maximum power," Autarch Titanos said with a chuckle.

They quickly separated into two squads, both led by Ning. The seven true bodies stood together on one side, while the seven avatars stood next to each other on the other side. Fourteen Autarch-class combatants were ready to do battle.

"It's all my fault for losing that Golden Bridge." Autarch Bolin shook his head.

"You aren't to blame. Those things simply required far too many precious ingredients. I did everything I could but was only able to create seven of them. Sometimes, I can't help but think to myself about what a coincidence it all was. We originally had an extra, but Darknorth rose just in the nick of time to round out the seventh," Titanos said with a sigh.

"To be able to battle alongside my six predecessors is Darknorth's honor," Ning said with a smile.

The seven of them stood in empty space, their hearts at peace. They had already cast aside all their worries. At a time like this, worrying wouldn't make any difference. They simply had to do everything they could to win.

If they died, all of civilization would die with them, but there was

nothing for that. The seven of them had truly done all they could.

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The ovaloid sphere continued to warp through space. Atop its outermost layer of grayish clouds stood a tall, gray-robed man who was slightly balding. His eyes seemed to contain the cosmos within them as he calmly stared at the empty space before him.

“It is finally time for the last battle.” Like the cultivators, Iyerre knew that he had reached the most critical moment in his entire life. He would either soar to the heavens and become a Lord of Chaos, becoming the most invincible figure in all the Infinite Void aside from his master... or he would be defeated and never have this opportunity again, even if he managed to survive.

He hadn't worried about the sphere of annihilation being destroyed, because he knew just how marvelous an object it was. There were only two ways by which it could be destroyed. The first way was to overpower it. As an Omega Autarch, outside of this foreign Chaosverse he himself would just barely be able to summon enough power to destroy it. The second way was to comprehend the apocalyptic mysteries it contained, at which point one would be able to easily deconstruct it.

Neither Autarchs nor Omega Emperors would be capable of such a task.

“This realm truly is a mesmerizing one,” Iyerre murmured. “This realm and all things within it should be mine to rule. These weaklings have continued to bar my path. Now, I shall sweep them all away.”

Whoosh. The Grassland World warped through spacetime one final time. By the time it reappeared, Iyerre could now see the enormous Annihilation Hive off in the distance, surrounded by that even-larger vortex which was destroying and devouring all things around it.

However, the fourteen figures standing here were even more noticeable than the vortex of destruction. Ning and his peers stood side-by-side, while the seven avatars did the same.

The fourteen calmly watched as that ovaloid object flew through space

towards them. The only person standing on the surface of the ovaloid object was Iyerre, and he smiled thinly when he saw the fourteen. He swept his gaze across them, then let out a chuckle which echoed throughout spacetime: “No more running? No more hiding?”

“There’s nowhere to run,” Autarch Titanos said.

“We’ll give you what you want. We’re going to fight you to the death.” Ning smiled.

“Iyerre, I hope you don’t piss yourself when you see our real power,” Autarch Ekong said with a laugh.

“I think he probably will piss himself,” Autarch Bolin smirked.

Ning and the others all smiled or laughed as they spoke. Iyerre wasn’t angered by this. He simply smiled back and nodded. “You natives are quite brave.”

Chapter 7: Doll

The two sides stared at each other from far. They seemed relaxed, but the atmosphere was already beginning to tense up.

“Hmph. Talking won’t solve anything. Come and stop my Grassland World, if you dare,” Iyerre said, then sank into the gray clouds and vanished. At the same time, the ovaloid object transformed into a streak of light and shot towards the vast behemoth hive.

Ji Ning and the others traded glances.

“Iyerre vastly surpasses us in terms of insight. Now that he’s personally in control of the Grassland World, no formation we can use would be able to slow it down.” Autarch Titanos smiled. “The Grassland World can enter the Annihilation Hive with ease, protecting it and allowing it to continue devouring our Chaosverse’s energies. The only way to stop it is to go inside of it!”

“Charge into the Grassland World and break it apart.” Autarch Bolin nodded slightly.

“That’s the only option. Gentlemen, let’s do this.” Ning laughed.

“We’ll have to trouble you to lead us in this fight, Darknorth. We’ll need your guidance for the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan,” Autarch Stonerule said.

“I can serve as the leader, but I’ll need all of your support.”

“Let’s go.”

“Let’s do this.” Ning and the others shared a few quick words, then began to make their moves.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The seven Autarchs and their seven avatars began to simultaneously call upon the power of the Chaosverse, gathering it around them to form vortexes of energy that quickly transformed into a pair of towering titans! Both titans were nearly nude and clad only in fur loin-cloths, but one had a slightly more powerful aura than the other.

The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan advanced side-by-side towards the ovaloid object.

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Iyerre appeared out of nowhere within the palace hidden deep within the Grassland World. Flanking him was the silver-robed woman and the two men, while below him stood the Sithe Exalts and the three Autarch-class void dwellers.

“Vilesky, you three come over here to the center,” Iyerre instructed.

The three Autarch-class void dwellers exchanged puzzled glances, then nervously advanced to the center of the palace. The cyclopean bear, the red-eyed white-furred humanoid, and the tentacled stormcloud harbored distrust towards the Sithe, but unfortunately they were much weaker than Iyerre. There was nothing they could do! In the Infinite Void they were weaker than Iyerre, and even here in the Grassland World they were still weaker than Iyerre.

“Those native cultivators are about to attack. This shall be the final battle.” Iyerre glanced down at the three void dwellers, then smiled: “I’ll need you three to be prepared to make sacrifices for our victory.”

“Just tell us what you need us to do. We’ll do everything in our power,” the three responded respectfully.

“Excellent.” Iyerre nodded. “What I need is for the three of you to offer me your lives.”

Surprise appeared in the eyes of the cyclopean bear and the other two, only to be quickly replaced by utter terror. Suddenly, nine violet-gold chains appeared in the area around them. Each chain moved in an abstruse and profound manner, and they howled through the air as they lashed out at the three Autarch-class void dwellers.

“Iyerre, what the hell are you doing?!”

“Didn’t you promise to give us our freedom if we helped you?”

“Why are you attacking us?!”

The three void dwellers tried to fight back, but now that Iyerre was personally controlling the violet-gold chains, the void dwellers were vastly outclassed in both power and technique. The violet-gold chains immediately began to land brutal blows on them, causing their bodies to explode. The chains then quickly wrapped around their life-cores.

The nearby Sithe Exalts all watched in shocked silence. None of them dared to say a word. They knew how ruthless Iyerre was. To him, anyone and everyone was but a pawn to further his goals. The ‘promises’ those three Autarch-class void dwellers had believed in were nothing more than jokes!

“Give you your freedom?” Iyerre stared down at them, his eyes flickering coldly. “Did you three idiots really think you were qualified to negotiate terms with me? If it wasn’t for the fact that I had a use for you, I never would’ve let you remain alive for this long.” Iyerre then reached out with his right hand, producing three adorably-shaped black dolls. The three black dolls flew out to hover directly above the center of the palace.

Hiss. Hiss. Hiss. The shattered remnants of the void dwellers’ bodies began to fly towards the black dolls. Even their life-cores, still entangled by those chains, began to fly towards them.

“No...!”

“No... but... no!”

The three Autarch-class void dwellers suddenly felt a sensation of infinite terror. Those ordinary looking dolls were exerting lethal amounts of gravitational attraction, causing their life-cores to uncontrollably fly towards them. Their splattered bits of blood and flesh were also flying towards the black dolls, and as soon as they touched the dolls they were swallowed up with a hiss.

“Iyerre, you’ll definitely fail. You’ll fail!!!” a life-core with the illusion of a cyclopean bear inside screamed frantically.

“You’ll die! The cultivators will kill you all!” The life-core which was filled with an illusion of a tentacled stormcloud was struggling and braying as well.

“Damn you, Iyerre! You are shameless!” the phantom of the red-eyed, white-furred beast bellowed.

The three life-cores flew towards the three black dolls, which effortlessly devoured them as well as the flesh and blood from their corpses.

Iyerre couldn't help but secretly feel amazed by this. “Master's skills in artifice are simply incredible. Those Autarch-class void dwellers might be foolish, but their bodies are incredibly sturdy. It is their bodies which gave them Autarch levels of power, but the dolls were able to devour them with ease. I may also be an Omega Autarch, but I'm far from being Master's equal when it comes to artifice.”

His master was a Lord of Chaos. Although they were both Omega Autarchs, Iyerre felt that his master remained superior to him in many different areas!

It was much like how Bolin, Titanos, Mogg, and the others were all Autarchs but shared different insights and were at different levels of power. There was indeed a great difference in power between Iyerre and his Master. The creation of the Annihilation Hive and the Grassland World had only been possible because his master had provided him guidance from behind the scenes. As for the black dolls, his master had personally created these things.

Whoosh! The three black dolls floating in midair suddenly began to dramatically expand in size, transforming into a trio of towering black scaled beasts which now lay on the ground. They pulsed with auras of power but didn't move in the slightest.

“Separate into three squads as I previously instructed.” Iyerre glanced at his other subordinates. The silver-robed woman, the black-robed man, and the red-robed man immediately acknowledged the order while the many Sithe Exalts quickly took up positions behind them.

“From now on, each squad will be in charge of controlling one of these machine warbeasts,” Iyerre said. “Although each has devoured the full power of an Autarch-class void dweller, it will only be able to fight at peak power for roughly one hour. Thus, we must achieve victory as soon as

possible.”

“Understood,” the silver-robed woman and the other two said. They had known all along that this was going to happen. Indeed, the reason why Iyerre had invited them to take part in this invasion was for them to operate the machine warbeasts. Ordinary Exalts were a bit too weak to truly unleash the potential of these things in battle. Each of the three would control one, with the other Exalts providing assistance.

“Now go,” Iyerre commanded.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!!! The silver-robed woman and the others quickly flew inside the enormous machine warbeasts and took control of them. This was a major trump card which their Lord of Chaos had bestowed upon Iyerre.

“GWAAAAAR!” The three black warbeasts raised their heads and howled. Their auras were actually stronger than those of the Autarch-class void dwellers, because the machine warbeasts were burning up all of their power at a rapid pace while holding nothing back. They could also attack with marvelous techniques; they weren’t nearly as clumsy as those void dwellers were!

“They are coming.” Iyerre raised his head to stare towards the skies. He could see two towering giants wielding divine swords chop through the grayish clouds as though the clouds were nothing more than rotted wood. The two titans charged downwards, easily piercing through the layers of clouds.

“Follow my orders.” A savage look appeared on Iyerre’s face. “Each of you can only fight for an hour, so we need to do everything we can to annihilate them during that period of time! This is the Grassland World, a battlefield of our choosing. We’re definitely going to win. Now go! Kill these cultivators!”

“Kill!” Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. The three black warbeasts quickly warped through space and disappeared from the temple.

As for Iyerre, his eyes were blazing as he barked, “Quintessence, ignite!” Instantly, the quintessence core located deep within the Grassland World

once more began to erupt with power, filling every inch of the entire world with tremendous might. The battle had just begun, but everyone was already preparing to fight like a madman!

Iyerre disappeared from the palace, going forth to face his foes.

Chapter 8: World of Liberation

The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan both continued to charge downwards. Whoosh! Whoosh! The clouds had become much sturdier now that the quintessence had been ignited, but before the might of Ji Ning's Sword Titan and Avatar Titan they remained unspeakably fragile.

Sword-light flashed as they pierced straight through the clouds, charging all the way down to the second layer of clouds. Right at this moment, they all suddenly sensed danger.

"Eh?" Ning was the leader of this formation and was constantly on guard for any possible movements. Suddenly, three enormous black warbeasts appeared from the clouds nearby. They looked much like armor-clad apes, but they each had a pair of curved horns on their heads. Their knees were bent into a half-stooped position, and they stared intently at the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan.

"Where the hell did these three come from?" Autarch Ekong sent mentally. "All of them seem dangerous."

"This is probably one of the trump cards the Sithe have been hiding the entire time. Now that the last battle has begun, they no longer see a need to hide themselves," Titanos sent back. "These three beasts have odd auras. Be careful, Darknorth."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

"Attack!"

"Die, cultivators!" The three warbeasts attacked simultaneously, first surrounding the nearby Avatar Titan. The Avatar Titan lifted up his twin swords, ready to meet their attacks.

The furious claw-strikes of the warbeasts caused the very heavens to darken as they lashed out with overwhelming power towards the Avatar Titan. In turn, the Avatar Titan swept out with his right hand, generating an ephemeral streak of sword-light in the air which struck out at the warbeast. Whoosh! The sword-light immediately retracted, while the

warbeast simply howled and continued to press the attack.

“These three machine warbeasts are extremely powerful.” Ning and the others were all shocked. “They’re actually able to fight our Avatar Titan to a standstill. Our sword-arts will only be enough to hold off two of them at most.”

“Die!” The three warbeasts fought with uncommon ferocity. Clearly, they wanted to destroy this weaker-looking titan as soon as they could.

Whoosh! The nearby Sword Titan had already charged over, sending an awesome stream of sword-light slashing through the air with unstoppable force. One of the warbeasts immediately used both of its paws to block this attack head-on. Both combatants had extremely marvelous techniques, but an explosion rang out as soon as the paws struck against the horizontal sword-strike. The warbeast was sent flying backwards, and it only managed to catch its footing after flying a million kilometers backwards. Then, it once more charged over.

“It is extremely strong, and its scales are just as tough as the black tower which houses the sphere of annihilation. There’s no way to injure it at all.” Ning was secretly alarmed.

Clang! Clang! Clang!!! A series of clanking sounds could be heard as one violet-gold chain after another began to appear. They were like great serpents which blotted out the skies, emanating auras of awesome power as they swept out towards the weaker Avatar Titan and sought to destroy it.

“The chains aren’t that dangerous.” Ning didn’t worry too much about them at all.

The three black warbeasts and the nine violet-gold chains continued to furiously assault the Avatar Titan, but the Avatar Titan and the Sword Titan fought alongside each other. The Sword Titan was especially mighty, with each of its blows sending the black warbeasts flying with ease and making it impossible for them to gain a true advantage over the Avatar Titan. The warbeasts truly were rather troublesome, as their techniques were brilliant and they were completely impervious to damage.

“Eh?” Ning, Titanos, and the others suddenly sensed a new threat approaching. They hurriedly turned to look towards the skies, only to see the figure of Iyerre appear. Iyerre’s robes were fluttering around him, and his body was covered by an awesome aura of power formed from the energies released by the ignited quintessence core. He was currently diving downwards head first, his hands folded in a prayer position before him. An absolutely dazzling stream of golden light was emanating from between his hands, preparing to spread outwards.

Omnipresent... light.

It almost instantly illuminated the entire Grassland World. The light was blinding, and it weighed down heavily upon both the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan.

“Die!” Iyerre changed his stance, pulling back his left hand while pushing out with his right. He had once used this technique against Mogg, but now that he was using the ignited quintessence core’s power this strike was now much stronger than before. When fighting Mogg, he had to spend quite a bit of time to accumulate the amount of energy necessary. This time, he was quite fast.

“Iyerre isn’t all that powerful, but he’s at such a high level of insight that he can employ his energies to terrifying effect.” Ning immediately made the Sword Titan to slice upwards with a sword, blocking Iyerre’s downwards palm.

BOOM! This unfathomably powerful palm crashed head-on against the all-encompassing sword.

Iyerre staggered a few steps backwards, a frown on his face: “This formation-giant is incredibly strong. Darknorth is making perfect use of these native cultivators’ powers.”

“Hmph.” The Sword Titan had been able to block Iyerre with ease. Even when Iyerre was using his most powerful strike, he was only 30% more powerful than the machine warbeasts. It wasn’t enough to threaten the Sword Titan.

“Light!” Boom! Iyerre began to glow with even more dazzling light. The

light was everywhere, filling the entire world with an iridescent glow. What worried Ning the most... was that he could no longer find Iyerre! After releasing that blast of infinite light, Iyerre had actually vanished into the light itself. Ning could neither see him physically nor track him via godsense.

Suddenly, an alabaster arm reached out to grab at the Avatar Titan.

“That’s Iyerre!” The Avatar Titan hurriedly moved to block. Since Ning was controlling both titans, he was able to make them work in perfect concert. The Sword Titan immediately went over to help out as well.

The dazzling light continued to suppress both the titans, while Iyerre launched one sneak attack after another with incomparably profound techniques. Blocking his attacks was very taxing, and eventually one would get through.

“Everyone, prepare the World of Liberation,” Ning sent.

“Alright.” Titanos, Mogg, and the others all knew that the moment had come. They had been planning to save this trump card for use at a critical moment, but they were now at such a disadvantage that they were finding it hard to even maintain their defenses. It was too hard for the Sword Titan to defend against the warbeasts, the chains, and Iyerre at the same time. The Avatar Titan was in tremendous danger right now, and once it was destroyed their foes would be free to focus their attacks against the Sword Titan. When that happened, the situation would become even grimmer.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Suddenly, six surges of power shot out simultaneously. Golden bridges began to appear directly beneath the feet of the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan. It was the Golden Bridges of Freedom! The six Golden Bridges of Freedom joined together into a hexagonal shape, forming a single complete edifice! They began to accumulate awesome amounts of power from the Chaosverse that surpassed even the power of the ignited Grassland World.

It must be remembered that the Golden Bridges of Freedom were

modeled off the Daoguard Towers. They were able to accumulate and make use of large amounts of the Chaosverse's energies. Once they linked together, they were able to use even more!

“WORLD STANCE!” Ning roared. This was the only domain-type stance he had created for the fusion sword-arts – the World stance!

Rumble... Ning, Titanos, Bolin, Skyfeeder, Mogg, Stonerule, and Ekong began to simultaneously unleash their respective domains. Autarch Bolin actually unleashed two domains, one for the Claw Daobirth Essence and one for the Samsara Daobirth Essence.

As for Ning, he was responsible for controlling and unleashing the Eternal Omega Sword Dao Domain!

All eight domains came together, drawing upon the power of the Chaosverse as well as the power of the golden bridges themselves!

Ning's 'Omega Sword Dao Domain' was able to perfectly connect together all of these different domains, allowing the different types of power to merge together into dazzling streams of sword-light. The entire world became filled with countless streams of sword-light, each of which was formed from a different type of domain-energy. The power of this domain vastly surpassed Iyerre's domain of light.

“This is...” Iyerre and the warbeasts felt as though countless streams of sword-light had enveloped them and were pressing down on them, forcing them to resist it with every single movement they made.

“These eight different types of domain-energy and the power from the Golden Bridges of Freedom have been perfectly joined together to form this domain – the World of Liberation.” Ning and the others were all excited. As soon as the 'World of Liberation' domain was released, Iyerre and the others were dramatically weakened. Even the nine violet-gold chains were weakened significantly, and as a result Ning and the others immediately gained the upper hand.

“Join forces to kill Iyerre! Once Iyerre dies, those three indestructible warbeasts will begin to fall apart on their own,” Titanos sent mentally.

“Kill Iyerre!” Bolin barked.

“Attack!” Their eyes were filled with murder. The three warbeasts had been suppressed by their domain, reducing them to 70% of their normal power. Even if all of them joined forces against the Avatar Titan, it would still be able to defend against them using the Cavebright stance.

As for the powerful Sword Titan, it had only one target: Iyerre!

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RWX's Thoughts

Here's a quad release. We're oh-so-cloooooose!

Chapter 9: Death Battle

The Sword Titan charged incredibly fast towards Iyerre, whose face tightened. Even before the World of Liberation domain had started to suppress him, he wouldn't have dared to fight the Sword Titan in sole combat. Now that he only had around 60% of his full power, he would probably be destroyed in just ten strikes if he tried to fight the thing head-on.

"I can't believe these natives have actually forced me to do this." Iyerre immediately took a step forwards, vanishing into thin air.

"Damn." The Sword Titan's greatsword chopped through where Iyerre had just been, hitting nothing but air. Ji Ning, Bolin, Titanos, and the others were secretly infuriated by this. However, even in the outside world Iyerre was able to disengage from battle as he pleased. Here in the Grassland World, it was even easier for him.

"Since he's fled, let's first capture those three warbeasts then destroy the Grassland World's core. Without the Grassland World and the three warbeasts, Iyerre won't be able to cause much trouble." Ning and the others all knew that Iyerre wasn't able to summon much power due to the local Chaosverse suppressing him. He had to create and use powerful treasures in order to pose a threat to them.

However... the more powerful the treasure, the greater the cost to make it. It had taken Iyerre aeons to construct the Grassland World and the Annihilation Hive. If they managed to destroy the Grassland World, it would be ages before Iyerre would be able to challenge them again. By then, the cultivators would have grown far more powerful than they were right now.

Whoosh. The Sword Titan gripped the Northbow sword in both hands as it charged towards one of the warbeasts. Although they were indestructible, capturing them was still a possibility.

"Gwaaaaaar!" "Gwaaaaaar!" "Gwaaaaaar!"

The three black warbeasts separated, moving in three different

directions. Suddenly, all of them raised their heads, causing a strange black-white glyph to appear from their foreheads.

“Eh?” The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan both turned to stare upwards at the figure which had just appeared above them. It was Iyerre, who had disappeared just moments ago. Iyerre’s forehead also had a black-white glyph emanating from it. Countless strands of black and white light reached out, piercing through the air and connecting Iyerre to all three of the warbeasts. Together, they formed an incredibly marvelous formation which transformed Iyerre and the three warbeasts into one being!

The energy leaking out from the ignited quintessence core was being sucked up into this enormous formation, while the energies of the three warbeasts were also being rapidly consumed.

Iyerre and the three black warbeasts began to glow with blurry black-white light, and their auras increased dramatically in power.

“I can’t believe these natives have actually forced me to use my last trump card.” Iyerre gritted his teeth. In the end, this final battle had surpassed Iyerre’s expectations.

Iyerre had believed that with the battle being held within the Grassland World, the combined forces of himself, the three warbeasts, and the violet-gold chains would be more than enough to gain victory! Alas, Ning had first created an even more powerful sword-art with an extra Daobirth Essence in it, then unleashed the suppressive power of the World of Liberation domain. All this had forced Iyerre to unveil his very last card! He had truly gone all-out now, with nothing held back.

His master had been the one to create the black warbeasts! When they fought individually, they weren’t all that powerful, but when merged together into a single whole they were able to unleash their true power. This was why his master had also bestowed the Yin-Yang Formation upon him, allowing him to perfectly join together with those three beasts. However, this would cause the three warbeasts to run out of power even more quickly.

“Die!” Iyerre was above them while the three warbeasts circled around them. The four all glowed with unearthly halos of black-white light, and countless strands linked them together as they charged towards the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan.

Boom! The Sword Titan and Iyerre exchanged blows. The result was that Iyerre was knocked flying backwards, but he quickly regrouped and charged forward once more.

“He’s actually become so much more powerful!” Ning, Titanos, and the others were all shocked. The World of Liberation was suppressing Iyerre, but he had still skyrocketed in power to reach 70% of the Sword Titan’s might! Given his profound insights, he was now completely capable of sustained combat against the Sword Titan.

“If even he has become so powerful, then what of those three warbeasts?” Ning and the others knew that the situation had just taken a turn for the worse.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The Avatar Titan was being surrounded and besieged. He used his sword-arts to defend and exclusively focused on using the most defensive stance, the Cavebright stance. He instantly used this stance fifteen times in a row, but he was already in an extremely dangerous situation. The Sword Titan immediately brandished his sword, moving to reinforce the Avatar Titan.

“Haha! Native cultivators, you are doomed. All of you will die. None of you will escape!” Iyerre went forth to help destroy the Avatar Titan as well.

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The situation had instantly turned extremely grim. Even though the World of Liberation weighed down upon the Sithe, the Sithe had the unquestioned upper hand. Just two seconds later, the two titans were in an extremely disadvantageous situation despite working together.

“We can’t let this continue. If we just defend, we’ll definitely lose. We probably won’t be able to last for ten more seconds before the Avatar Titan is torn asunder. Once that happens, the Sword Titan will be swarmed and destroyed as well. We’ll lose this fight!” They all understood

this, which was why they were all extremely anxious. However, they had already used everything they had. It was incredible that they had reached this current level of power!

“There’s nothing we can do. Let’s go all-in.”

“Go all-in.”

“All-in.” Bolin, Mogg, Stonerule, Ekong, Skyfeeder, Titanos, and Ning all shared this exact same thought. Whoosh! Their bodies suddenly began to glow with light as a terrifying aura of power began to spread out.

It must be remembered that their bodies were completely formed of mana. Consequently, their bodies contained absolutely astonishing stores of energy. Hegemons and Emperors who were gripped by despair would choose to self-detonate, precisely because the sudden release of such an enormous amount of energy would generate an absolutely incredible explosion. Back during the Endwar of the Three Realms, many Immortals and Fiendgods had sacrificed themselves via self-detonation to deal Old Man Yuan a fatal blow.

Ning was an Omega Emperor, while the other six were Autarchs. They wouldn’t choose to self-detonate, as self-detonation might not even be enough to kill someone like Iyerre, who was extremely skilled at staying alive. If the seven of them died while Iyerre survived, they would have lost this war!

Just as importantly, at their current level of insight these seven had exquisitely perfect control over their bodies. Self-detonation would simply result in the explosion scattering energy out haphazardly. It was a fairly foolish choice, and they had chosen something else: to transform a portion of their bodies into raw power!

Ning and the Autarchs had chosen to sacrifice parts of their flesh and blood! Their bodies began to glow with light as a terrifying amount of power began to burst forth from them! In normal battle, it was easy for them to unleash ten thousand strikes because they were able to replenish as much energy as they used. Now, however, all of them suffered severe self-inflicted wounds because they had used up more than half of the

energy which had been stored in their bodies.

This was an absolute maximum. If they burned away even more energy, their damaged truesouls would no longer be able to maintain perfect control over this level of power. Every single speck of mana was infused with their souls and truesouls, after all! If they lost too much, their truesouls would weaken to the point where they could no longer maintain control. Only by maintaining perfect control would they be able to unleash truly awesome levels of power.

This was the most ideal, suitable time for taking such a risk... but they could only do so a single time! This was because they would all be so heavily wounded after this strike that they would have merely 40% of their strength remaining. There was no way they could duplicate this attack, and so it truly was their final, last-gasp attack.

“We have to win.”

“Kill!” Autarch Bolin’s entire body glowed with light as his severed flesh and blood transformed into raw power. He was able to maintain control over it, causing it to swirl around him instead of exploding.

“Prepare to die,” Autarch Ekong roared, his body surrounded by the awesome energies of the Destruction Daobirth Essence.

Skyfeeder, Mogg, Stonerule, Titanos, and the others all controlled their own energies as well. As for Ning, he drew upon the incredible power of his Sword Dao.

“All of you, DIE!” The Sword Titan’s aura suddenly skyrocketed in might, causing the entire Grassland World to quiver. The amount of energy generated by seven Autarchs sacrificing more than half of their bodies was simply too enormous. They only guided a tiny portion of it into the World of Liberation, but the domain’s power instantly skyrocketed! Boom! Boom! Boom! Countless rays of sword-light came pressing down, crushing the clouds below them into dust and even crushing the grasslands at the very bottom.

Boom! The Grassland World had been so completely suppressed by the sword-light, it was like a giant invisible hand had just caved it in by a

layer.

This was nothing more than a tiny, tiny amount of the energy the seven had just unleashed. They were keeping control over the rest of the power and preparing to use it to unleash a truly terrifying blow. This was the absolute maximum amount of power their damaged truesouls could control perfectly.

Iyerre could feel that death was coming for him. When he saw how terrifying this explosive aura before him was, he didn't even think about trying to defend against it head-on. "This is probably the final desperation strike these cultivators have up their sleeves. There's no way they would be able to launch a second such attack. If I can avoid this one, I'll have won."

"Withdraw!" Iyerre commanded. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Iyerre and the three warbeasts retreated simultaneously, vanishing within the void.

"Foolish cultivators, this is the Grassland World. This is our chosen battlefield!" Iyerre's voice rang out within the world.

"You are the fools!"

"Imbeciles!" Ning and Ekong let out furious retorts in succession, their voices echoing within the heavens.

Boom! Boom! The Avatar Titan and the Sword Titan charged downwards simultaneously, smashing into the grasslands. As soon as they did, they instantly blinked deep within its depths.

Chapter 10: Tit For Tat

When they entered the depths of the Grassland World, they quickly saw a spiderweb of countless passageways.

BOOM! An awesome domain filled every single passageway with countless streams of sword-light. The World of Liberation's power blew through every single formation like rotting wood, crushing all barriers in its path! It must be remembered that even before Ji Ning and the others had gone all-out, they had been able to reduce Iyerre and the others by 30% to 40% of their maximum power. Now that the Autarchs had gone all-out, the World of Liberation was so incredibly powerful that it was able to almost instantly crush ordinary Autarchs to death!

Even the nine layers of clouds were completely unable to block this intensity of energy, much less the barrier formations deep inside the grasslands.

"I've found it. The quintessence core for this world lies in that palace over there." Thanks to the World of Liberation, Ning and the others were able to sense a completely sealed castle located at the very bottom of the Grassland World. The castle was roughly ten thousand kilometers in size, and all of the energy emanating from the Grassland World actually stemmed from this castle. They could clearly sense how the deep, dense azure aura covering the castle was constantly being dispersed in every direction.

"If we can destroy the quintessence core, Iyerre and the others will be dramatically weakened! Those three warbeasts won't be able to escape us." They immediately transformed into a streak of light, bursting through the chaotic passageways and moving closer-and-closer to the castle.

Iyerre was able to dodge with ease because of his high level of insight, but the three warbeasts were only able to dodge because of the power of the Grassland World. The Sithe in charge of the black warbeasts had insights which were merely on par with Ning's. In Ning's Chaosverse, their escape techniques were far inferior to Ning's! So long as the

Autarchs could destroy the Grassland World, they would then be able to defeat and capture the three warbeasts one by one.

Once Iyerre was the only one left, he'd be much easier to deal with! But of course... all this was only possible if they destroyed the Grassland World!

"Dammit!" When Iyerre sensed the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan moving at high speed towards the quintessence, he immediately grew anxious. "How are they able to stay in control of all that power and prevent it from exploding?"

If someone was filled with too much power, there would be no way to maintain control of it. They would have to immediately release it in the form of an attack. However, Ning and the others had already thought of this problem. They only discarded 60% of their bodies, rather than 90% as they originally envisioned. The resulting levels of energy were just barely within the realms of what they could control; they could release it or retract it at will. Although it was much weaker than the pure destructive power which would be generated by sacrificing more in a one-shot attack, it allowed for an attack that they could aim and control. In the end, the latter was much more dangerous.

"Iyerre, what should we do? Are we going to just watch as they destroy the Grassland World's quintessence? Once they do, we probably won't be able to beat them," the red-robed man sent mentally. They had a huge advantage right now, but this was in large part due to the strengthening effect of the ignited quintessence core. The formation they were using also required them to draw upon the energies of the ignited quintessence.

"Go go go go go! Go stop them!" Iyerre roared. "Stop them at any cost!" The core of the Annihilation Hive was the sphere of annihilation, which contained the mysteries of total destruction. It was extremely hard to destroy. The core of the Grassland World, however, was just a normal quintessence which would be much easier to annihilate.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Iyerre and the three warbeasts easily warped over to the outsides of the core castle.

“They are about to arrive!” Iyerre and the others stared at the dark passageways before them. A terrifying aura was beginning to approach those dark passageways. The area had long ago been filled with the power of countless streams of sword-light, but the sword-light wasn’t strong enough to claim their lives.

“This is way too much power. Way too much!”

“Can we possibly stop them?” The silver-robed woman, her two colleagues, and the many Sithe Exalts all felt their hearts tremble.

“You can and you must. If we lose, the cultivators will not spare you. All of you will die!” Iyerre gritted his teeth, his eyes savage. The most critical moments had arrived. “And these three warbeasts were personally fashioned by my master. Not even I have the power to destroy them, much less these cultivators.”

The others calmed down slightly upon hearing this. They were filled with absolute, blind faith in Iyerre’s master.

“Here they are!” Iyerre and the others all felt their hearts clench as those two towering figures emerged from the dark passageways. The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan flew out right next to each other.

“It’s Iyerre and his lackeys. I knew they wouldn’t just watch as we destroyed the quintessence.” Ning and the others knew that the moment of truth had arrived.

“Charge!”

“Break into that castle at all costs!” Ning and the others didn’t hesitate at all. The Avatar Titan took the lead while the Sword Titan brought up the rear as they charged towards the castle. As long as they were able to touch it, they would be able to blink inside it.

“Stop them!” Iyerre roared ferociously. One violet-gold chain after another began to dance defensively in front of the castle, while all three black warbeasts charged in unison to block the Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan.

“Fuck off!” The Avatar Titan’s job was to clear the way, but the violet-

gold chains were being controlled in an absolutely marvelous fashion by Iyerre. They all parted before the Avatar Titan, coiling behind it to strike at the Sword Titan! Iyerre and the others all knew that the Avatar Titan wasn't that great of a threat. The true threat remained the Sword Titan, which was in command of an enormous amount of power.

"Grow, grow, grow!" The three black warbeasts suddenly expanded dramatically in size. The tunnels weren't that large, and their sudden increase in size resulted in them filling up much of the tunnel with their bulk. If Ning and the others wanted to reach the castle, they would have to first defeat these clawed terrors.

"If we have to fight them, we'll go ahead and destroy all three of them!" The Sword Titan wielded a longsword in each hand, lifting them up while the seven inside of it began to unleash the prodigious power which they had been keeping in abeyance.

Whoosh! The right sword sliced out, chopping towards the three black warbeasts which sought to bar the titan's path. The power contained within this sword caused spacetime itself to disintegrate. There was nothing which could impede this terrifying strike! All three warbeasts were utterly terrified by the might of this blow, while Iyerre gritted his teeth and prayed, "They have to block them!"

Whoosh! When the divine sword slammed against the body of the first warbeast, it suddenly transformed to become as soft as silk. It twisted, seeking to wrap itself over the black warbeast and bind it. The black warbeast, however, transformed to become a black liquid which the sword could not bind.

"You want to capture it? Do you think the most powerful machine warbeasts my master created would be so easily captured by the likes of you?" the distant Iyerre laughed coldly.

The Autarchs instantly understood that there was no way to capture them, and so they immediately changed strategies. "Destroy them!"

Whoosh! Whoosh! The two divine swords were filled with ineffable power as they came crashing down towards the three beasts. It must be

remembered that even an 'invulnerable form' would be destroyed if the amount of power facing it surpassed the limits of its tolerance! These three black warbeasts were currently forced to face the full, absolute might of this twin-attack from the dominating Sword Titan! The black warbeasts were extremely tough. They weren't the slightest bit injured, and in fact they were able to deflect 99% of the concussive force... but that remaining 1% entered its body and reduced the Sithe Exalts it encountered to dust.

"No!"

"Ahhh!" Bowenya and the others only felt an overwhelming amount of power pass through them, followed by their bodies completely disintegrating.

Boom! Boom! Boom!!! The three black warbeasts were sent flying backwards and smashed into the walls of the passageway. They were physically unharmed but filled with dead Sithe.

Thanks to the local formations, Iyerre was able to clearly see what the situation was inside the three black warbeasts. The three powerful allies he had half-coaxed, half-forced to come had been able to withstand that terrifying blast. However, all of the Sithe Exalts in the first and second warbeasts, which had taken the brunt of the strikes, had been slain! Three Sithe Exalts had died in the third warbeast as well. Now, only his three allies and five Sithe Exalts were remaining.

Boom! Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! The nine violet-gold chains had worked together with the black warbeasts to defend against this attack. Two of the chains actually blew apart! The Sword Titan shrank in size, seeking to fly through the gap, but the remaining chains flew over to block it once more.

"Ahahaha!" Iyerre's loud laughter echoed throughout the passageway. Ning and the others were anxious, nervous, and resentful.

"You have lost! LOST!" Iyerre roared with laughter. "That last-gasp desperation attack was very powerful, but both the warbeasts and the chains are completely fearless. You weren't able to destroy them and blast open a route to the castle!"

It was true. That final, frenzied strike had not done what they needed it to do – clear a path to the castle! Ning and the others gritted their teeth. Those warbeasts were simply too difficult to deal with.

“Those three warbeasts are finished. You are the only one left. You are the one who has lost, Sithe.” The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan charged straight towards Iyerre.

“Who said they are finished?” Iyerre let out a loud laugh.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The three black warbeasts once more flew over to block in front of Iyerre.

The black warbeasts were under the control of Iyerre’s three powerful allies. The Sithe Exalts merely provided additional support.

Ning and the others stared at the untouched Iyerre as well as the three enormous black warbeasts. Their hearts grew cold. As soon as they had witnessed the black warbeasts rise up once more, they had already begun to feel a sense of despair. Those things were still battle-worthy? How was this even possible?

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RWX's Thoughts

7 chapters remaining! We're almost there! - RWX

Chapter 11: Truly Unbearable

The seven dancing violet-gold chains and the three warbeasts were charging towards them once more. Ji Ning and the other Autarchs had already used up the massive energy they had gained from sacrificing parts of their bodies. Even the power of the World of Liberation had dropped back down to its normal level.

Boom! Bang! The Sword Titan used its sword-arts to defend against the three black warbeasts simultaneously.

“One of the warbeasts is just as strong as it was previously, while the other two still have 80% power.” Ning quickly came to this conclusion after clashing against them once more, and it turned their hearts cold.

Iyerre smiled coldly as he watched from behind, launching attacks towards the weaker Avatar Titan.

“Flee!” Ning and the others didn’t hesitate at all, quickly coming to this decision. Iyerre and the three warbeasts were as one thanks to the formation, and all four were incredibly strong. This was why Ning and the others had been forced to sacrifice parts of their bodies to launch a final desperation attack... but it had failed! If they were truly forced to fight the Avatar Titan would probably be defeated in short order, at which point the Sword Titan wouldn’t be far off from defeat either. As of right now, they had only one chance to survive – escape!

Escape the Grassland World, run far away, and recover! Once they did so, they could come back here to fight again.

Swoosh! Swoosh! The Sword Titan and the Avatar Titan both began to flee.

“Running? After all that’s happened, you still think you can escape?” Iyerre grinned coldly. He was effortlessly dominating the Avatar Titan with the help of the seven violet-gold chains, while the three black warbeasts continued to chase down the Sword Titan. “Stop struggling. Struggling won’t help you.”

Iyerre's body began to emit tremendous amounts of dazzling light which filled every single passageway. He himself vanished without a trace, hiding within the light while he continued to furiously assault the Avatar Titan. The Avatar Titan was just barely able to hold on, thanks to his defensive sword-arts!

Alas, Iyerre outstripped the Avatar Titan in terms of power, and he had a higher level of insight as well! Given that he also had seven violet-gold chains helping him while he launched sneak attacks from hiding, it only took six seconds before Iyerre managed to land a knife-hand blow on the Avatar Titan, plunging it into the titan's body and causing the avatars inside to feel a sense of despair.

Riiiiip! The towering Iyerre used his two hands to physically rip the Avatar Titan in half. Ning and the other avatars shared a glance, then simultaneously made the same decision without any hesitation at all: self-detonation!

Boom! Boom! Boom! All seven avatars exploded simultaneously.

Their worry was that when Iyerre killed them, he would use karma to route the attacks against their true bodies as well! Autarch Bolin and Autarch Titanos were able to completely cut themselves off from all karmic ties, but what of the others? If Iyerre wasn't reinforced by this formation his karmic attacks probably wouldn't be a threat to them, but he was currently strengthened by both the ignited quintessence core and his link to the three warbeasts. Ning and the others didn't dare to take this risk.

"A clean end." Iyerre turned to glance upwards. "But it won't matter. Struggle all you want. You are doomed."

Whoosh. He took a step forwards, warping through space before appearing in front of the Sword Titan.

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The Sword Titan was frantically trying to flee, but the three black warbeasts continued to slow him down, preventing him from travelling at maximum speed.

“These warbeasts are indestructible and can warp through spacetime to block us.” Ning and the others felt anxious.

“We’re almost there.” Whoosh. They finally reached the grassy surface once more, at which point the Sword Titan blinked out to the clouds above.

“Hahaha!” Iyerre’s loud laughter rang out. The Sword Titan raised his head, the seven all watching as Iyerre emerged out of nowhere and appeared in the skies. Iyerre said with a laugh, “There are nine layers of clouds here. It will take you so very, very long to fly through all these layers that I’m afraid you won’t be able to escape.”

“Damn.” Ning and the others all knew that Iyerre was far more difficult to deal with than those three black warbeasts, because of how high his level of insight was.

“Escaping is our only chance.”

“Let’s give it our all.”

“Do everything we can to escape.” Titanos, Mogg, Ning, Bolin, Ekong, Stonerule, and Skyfeeder all knew that they had to get out of here.

Boom! Twin swords in hand, the Sword Titan began to soar toward the clouds.

“Do you really think you can escape?” Iyerre charged downwards, surrounded by seven violet-gold chains that stretched out a million kilometers. Space rippled behind him, followed by the three black warbeasts appearing.

Swoosh! The Sword Titan immediately arced sideways in a bid to avoid them, but the seemingly-omnipresent violet-gold chains still managed to appear in front of them, as did Iyerre and the three warbeasts.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Boom!

The Sword Titan used its sword-arts to battle against Iyerre and the three black warbeasts while continuing to soar towards the clouds in the skies. Although the three black warbeasts were extremely strong, they didn’t

pose too much of a threat because they were merely on par with Ning and the others in terms of insight. Ning was able to use his self-created fusion sword-arts to block all three of them... but Iyerre was much more dangerous! Iyerre's attacks caught Ning flat-footed time and time again. Blocking his attacks was a much more difficult proposition.

Iyerre didn't even need to fear the Sword Titan in solo combat, much less now when he had the three black warbeasts helping to slow the titan down.

"If we just keep defending, we're going to lose. We have to escape!" Ning and the Autarchs couldn't see any chance of winning this battle. Their only chance lay in escape. If they got out of here, they just might end up the victors after all!

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Boom! Boom! Boom! Spacetime was shattered throughout the Grassland World, with the Five Elements thrown into a state of chaos as the Sword Titan continued to charge upwards while being surrounded and bombarded with attacks by the Sithe.

Boom! The power of the World of Liberation, by itself, was enough to tear through the clouds. The Sword Titan charged upwards through the opening, but Iyerre and the black warbeasts continued to press the attack against him. Iyerre was like a patient hunter, continuing to harass his prey while searching for the perfect opportunity. Ning and the others felt as though they had daggers pressed against their backs. Every single attack Iyerre launched was incredibly dangerous.

"We have to hold until we get out! We have to."

"Keep holding!"

Titanos and the rest quietly prayed. It was now up to Ning. Ning was in control of the entire Sword Titan, and he used it to execute his sword-arts. This was an extremely taxing fight! The three black warbeasts had insights on par with his, while Iyerre's insights were far more profound. It was already impressive for him to maintain an airtight defense, but they really couldn't afford to let themselves be beaten here. If they lost, it would all be

over!

Boom! The Sword Titan charged past the second layer of clouds, continuing its upwards ascent.

“Not good.” Ning paled as Iyerre managed to snake a palm past the Sword Titan’s defensive sword-stances. Ning didn’t hesitate, immediately discarding the Northbow sword in his left hand and using his hand instead to launch a sword-art. Boom! He managed to block Iyerre’s palm.

“He actually blocked it?” Iyerre had thought he was about to win. He couldn’t help but feel slightly startled.

As the Sword Titan was knocked flying backwards, yet another Northbow sword appeared in his left hand. Ning had a total of six Northbow swords, after all! As for the one he had discarded, it had flown back to below the Golden Bridges of Freedom.

Boom! The Sword Titan burst through the third layer of clouds. However, as it did so a ghostly and gigantic palm once more burst past Ning’s defenses. This time, Ning was completely unable to react. The palm slammed into the left side of the Sword Titan’s waist, with the Sword Titan unable to block even with his hands.

“NO!!!!” Ning, Titanos, Bolin, and the others all watched in shock. Time itself seemed to have slowed down.

Bang! The alabaster fingers pierced deep into the Sword Titan’s flank, stabbing straight through it. Then, as though it could sense the Autarchs, it reached out towards the nearest person inside – Autarch Mogg.

Autarch Mogg wanted to block... but how could he?

“No. We can’t lose!” Tears appeared in Autarch Mogg’s face. Bang! The giant alabaster hand stabbed into him, filling every inch of his body with a burst of such overwhelming power that every last speck of mana within it began to crumble from the force of the strike.

BOOM! He was completely obliterated. Not even a scrap of his truesoul fragments was able to return to this Chaosverse. Everything had been devoured.

Riiiiip. With Mogg's death, the entire Sword Titan began to destabilize. Iyerre tore at the insides of the Sword Titan with his alabaster hand, ripping a gaping wound through the Sword Titan's chest and to its shoulders, nearly cleaving the titan in half.

"Kill them!" Iyerre's voice was filled with intoxicated glee as well as a boundless desire for his foes to die.

"Kill!" The three black warbeasts grew excited as well. They were about to win! They all pounced down towards the already-crumbling Sword Titan, while Iyerre himself began to launch an attack as well.

"We can't lose." Ning desperately tried to make the Sword Titan wield the Northbow sword and block, but without Mogg the power of their sword-arts dropped dramatically. There was no way for him to stop Iyerre, whose attack once more dug deep into the Sword Titan's body. This time, he managed to latch onto Autarch Skyfeeder. Light glowed around his palm, and Autarch Skyfeeder was similarly unable to defend against him. The end result was destruction.

"Damn it all!" Autarch Skyfeeder stared into the skies, filled with despair and resentment.

BOOM! Upon her death, the Sword Titan's body crumbled apart as well. Now that they had lost two Autarchs, the Sword Titan was no longer able to stay intact. Ning, Titanos, and the others began to instinctively flee despite their despair.

"Hahaha!" A black warbeast pounced forwards, clawing at Autarch Stonerule's back. Autarch Stonerule was absolutely agonized. "Why? Why? WHY!" BOOM! Autarch Stonerule was annihilated as well, his truesoul fragments completely devoured.

Ning continued to flee, his heart feeling as though it was being cut apart by countless knives. All he could do was watch as one of his friends after another was killed.

"I can't lose. We really can't lose!" Countless figures flashed through Ning's mind. This Chaosverse was filled with innumerable living beings. Ning's friends... his disciples... his family members... the hard-working

cultivators he knew... there were countless people in this Chaosverse, part of whom he knew and part of whom he didn't.

They had lost. Their entire civilization was about to be overthrown.

"I'm sorry." Autarch Titanos didn't struggle. He simply shut his eyes, two streams of tears cascading down his face as he transformed himself into a plume of light. However, the black warbeast's sharp claws reached out, still managing to capture and devour all the truesoul fragments and prevent them from returning to the Quintessence.

"Wipe them all out!" Iyerre roared with laughter. "Kill them all! Drown their entire civilization with blood! This Chaosverse is MINE! IYERRE'S! AHAHAHA!"

But then... the entire Grassland World seemed to have fallen silent. All other auras were completely suppressed, while Iyerre's laughter became frozen as well. He suddenly turned to stare at the sword-bearing white-robed youth. Two streams of tears were cascading down the youth's face.

A ripple of pure 'blackness' swept out from Ning's body. That utterly black ripple contained an utterly terrifying will of destruction. This was true destruction, a will which would obliterate any and all things. Nothing and no one could withstand this type of oblivion.

The white-robed youth opened his eyes, and within those eyes they could see the annihilation of an entire Chaosverse.

Chapter 12: Oblivion Sword Dao

Ji Ning saw the Sword Titan shatter, then saw Autarch Mogg, Autarch Stonerule, Autarch Skyfeeder, and Autarch Titanos all perish in battle. Even he himself was about to die. Ning's heart was filled with resentment and an unwillingness to accept this all. He was filled with remorse towards all the living beings of this Chaosverse, filled with remorse towards his daughter. I'm really sorry, everyone.

He felt resentment, pain, remorse... and boundless hate.

When he saw the maniacally laughing Iyerre, Ning felt true hatred. To use a common saying from his first life in China on Earth, 'even after dying and becoming a ghost, he still wouldn't forgive or spare Iyerre'! However, in his heart he knew that once he died, his truesoul fragments would be completely swallowed and devoured. All that hatred he felt was completely meaningless! It was precisely because he understood this that the hatred and agony in Ning's heart was only further heightened.

Hatred! Hatred aimed at himself for being too weak!

Hatred! Hatred aimed at himself for being unable to protect those he cared about.

He truly did want to annihilate all of these invaders!

Boundless hatred filled his heart. He didn't want to die. Titanos, Mogg... they had felt the same way. They had died with their eyes open. Death held no release for them!

This powerful will of hatred caused all of Ning's thoughts, his very consciousness itself, to become completely transformed into just one thing – an overwhelming desire to kill! An insatiable desire to destroy! As this completely unprecedented desire for destruction filled him, all of the questions and confusion Ning felt towards the Oblivion Sword Dao were completely wiped clean. Everything came to its logical conclusion, resulting in the Oblivion Sword Dao taking a complete and perfect form within Ning's mind!

“So this is what ‘true destruction’ is. I always felt that I was lacking a little spark when it came to understanding it, preventing my version of it from being the real thing. So this is what I lacked.” Finally, Ning completely understood.

The power of pure darkness rippled out from Ning. It held the interlinked Five Elements, the transformations of Yin and Yang, both Light and Dark, and both Space and Time. They were all connected to each other by the binds of Karma... and the karmic links that existed between them were formed by Ning’s pure, destructive intent! All of them were being destroyed by Ning’s will, resulting in a chain reaction that came together to form ‘Oblivion’.

“I had actually built up enough insight long ago, and even my overall path was correct. The only reason why I hadn’t been able to succeed was because I was missing a truly intense will to cause absolute destruction, a will which linked all other Daos together and then annihilated them! Now, all of my insights have come together to form true destruction – Oblivion!”

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“This is bullshit! Bullshit!!!” Autarch Ekong was filled with heart-rending grief and rage as the black warbeast charged towards him.

“Life and death are in an endless cycle... but once this civilization comes to an end, the cycle shall be broken for us. Everything shall truly be destroyed.” Autarch Bolin was filled with boundless grief as well.

Suddenly, they sensed the world around them turn completely still. Even the terrifyingly powerful aura of the Sithe was quickly suppressed, followed by an even more horrifying aura of destruction sweeping out. Both Autarch Ekong and Autarch Bolin turned their heads to look, only to see a terrifying ripple of darkness emanating from that white-robed youth.

“Darknorth!” Despair vanished from the hearts of Autarch Bolin and Autarch Ekong. Both felt as though color had come back to the world. They both grew excited.

Iyerre and the three black warbeasts had simultaneously turned to stare at Ning, their hearts beginning to tremble. “Is that... true destruction?”

Iyerre's face turned pale. He immediately barked, "Kill them! Keep killing them!"

"Attack!"

"Attack!" The two black warbeasts that had been charging towards Autarch Bolin and Autarch Ekong hesitated slightly, then immediately obeyed the order and continued to press the attack. They knew that there was no way out. It didn't matter what breakthrough Emperor Darknorth had just made. They had to follow this path to the bitter end!

The distant white-robed Ning opened his eyes. He was able to read the situation at a glance.

"Oblivion Sword Dao!"

Rumble... the countless streams of sword-light which permeated this entire region all became pitch black. The streaks of pitch-black sword-light were absolutely terrifying to behold, and their power increased immeasurably. Although they didn't possess as much power as the Sword Titan had when the seven Autarchs had sacrificed parts of their bodies, the pitch-black sword-light was still far more powerful than the normal World of Liberation domain. They also moved in much more marvelous and intricate ways than before.

The three black warbeasts and Iyerre all felt their bodies sink down under the weight of this domain's pressure.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Previously, the Sword Titan had been wielding two of the Northbow swords, with a third Northbow sword beneath the Golden Bridge of Freedom which it was standing on. Upon its destruction, all three swords had gone flying. Now, under Ning's control, the three Northbow swords began to shoot out towards those three black warbeasts at a speed far greater than Ning's own flying speed.

"What's this?" The black warbeast who was charging towards Autarch Ekong and trying to kill him suddenly noticed a black streak of light shooting towards it at terrifying speed. It was actually three times as fast

as the warbeast itself! It was a Northbow sword.

“Beat it.” The black warbeast raked out with its claws, seeking to knock the Northbow sword aside. However, the Northbow sword dodged in an incredibly agile, almost ghostly manner. The sword easily dodged past the claws, then hacked straight at the black warbeast’s neck. This sword was filled with a pure will of destruction, and it caused the silver-robed woman inside the black warbeast to shiver in fear. Thankfully, she was inside the black warbeast. If she was outside, she probably would’ve died from the first blow.

The black warbeast stumbled backwards slightly from the blow, but it remained undamaged.

Swish! The black warbeast pursuing Autarch Bolin was also intercepted by a Northbow sword. Although a single sword controlled from afar wouldn’t be enough to defeat one of these black warbeasts, it was enough to tie it down.

“Damnit.” Iyerre’s face grew uglier and uglier. “He’s mastered true destruction? We have to kill him. Given enough time, he’s probably going to become an Omega Autarch and bind this entire Chaosverse. When that happens, we won’t even be able to fight back against him.”

Mastering true destruction meant that Ning had taken one step into the realm of Omega Autarchy! He was able to comprehend ‘Oblivion’, but at the very end of ‘Oblivion’ was ‘Creation’. This represented the true apex of all cultivation, Omega Autarchy! Ning was native to this Chaosverse, born and bred here. If he became an Omega Autarch, he’d naturally become able to take control over this Chaosverse. There was no way Iyerre could permit something like this to happen!

It was much like how Autarch Bolin had reached an extremely high level of insight into ‘life and death’ and was extremely powerful, but hadn’t been able to master the Samsara Daobirth Essence no matter how hard he tried until he himself was at the brink of death. Ning had been a bit better off; he had been able to take an incomplete step into Omega Autarchy by mastering ‘Oblivion’! He had gained a much higher level of insight, and

the amount of power he could summon from the Dao had dramatically increased as well. All by himself, he was now slightly more powerful than the Sword Titan which all seven of them had to work together to create.

“Darknorth!” Autarch Bolin and Autarch Ekong were both overjoyed.

“You’ve become an Omega Autarch?” Autarch Ekong asked.

“Not yet.” Ning was radiating a will of destruction. “But leave Iyerre and the others to me.”

“Alright.” Bolin and Ekong both nodded. Ning immediately flew out.

The three black warbeasts and Iyerre wished to first kill Ekong and Bolin, but they were all stopped by Ning’s swords. Given that the Oblivion Sword Dao was suppressing and weakning them, they could do nothing but simply watch as Ning drew Ekong and Bolin into his estate-world treasure.

“Titanos. Skyfeeder. Stonerule. Mogg. Don’t worry, my friends. I’m going to kill them all. NO ONE shall ever be able to annihilate our civilization!” Ning stared at the distant Iyerre and those three black warbeasts, then manifested his three-headed, six-armed form. Three of his six hands reached out, grabbing the three Northbow swords which flew to him from afar. Moments later he had all six Northbow swords ready, and he emanated an aura of absolute murder.

“Mastering ‘true destruction’ won’t save you. Surround and kill him!” Iyerre roared as he, the three black warbeasts, and the seven violet-gold chains attacked Ning simultaneously.

Ning’s eyes were as cold as ice, and he charged forwards to meet them with all six Northbow swords at the ready.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Ning was noticeably faster than before, and he transformed into a streak of black light as he shot outwards. His swords were now even more shockingly powerful than before, allowing him to instantly battle against all three black warbeasts and Iyerre at the same time. Sword-light flashed around him, each flash filled with an awesome amount of power. As far as close combat went, he was now

much stronger and more effective than previously when he was only able to use a single sword. He had also reached a much higher level of insight into the Dao of the Sword, allowing him to drill deep into the black warbeasts' bodies with each strike from his sword!

Although his blows couldn't compete with the final desperation attack the Sword Titan had used, they were more intricate and caused agony to the Sithe inside the warbeasts.

"We can't hold on!"

"We can't stop him for much longer!" The five Sithe Exalts sent mentally. Alas, it was too late! Ning struck incredibly fast, and he was in his three-headed, six-armed form. He landed three consecutive strikes against one of the black warbeasts, each strike transmitting the power of destruction inside of the warbeast. The main controller had a body tough enough to endure these blows, but the five Sithe Exalts all perished after taking three such collisions. Even worse, the awesome power of Oblivion which washed over them resulted in even their truesouls being devoured.

It was much like how the sphere of annihilation was able to devour anything, even truesoul fragments. Ning's own power was coursing with the will of Oblivion, allowing him to do the same thing.

"Their truesoul fragments have been completely devoured!" Iyerre's three allies began to panic. The only surviving Sithe were the three of them and Iyerre himself.

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RWX's Thoughts

5 chapters to go!

Chapter 13: Wiped Out

Iyerre naturally knew just how deadly Darknorth was now that the man had mastered Oblivion. He immediately sent consolingly, “Don’t worry. Although I can’t revive you if your truesouls are destroyed, I’ll ask my master to do so! Neither of us have any way out of this. We have to beat Darknorth in battle. As long as we can win, any of you who do end up dying will be revived as well.”

Normally, in order to bring someone back to life, the process which both Autarchs and Omega Autarchs used involved reverse spacetime to call back the truesoul fragments! However, once you became a Lord of Chaos, things were completely different. To a Chaoslord, whether or not the truesoul fragments were destroyed didn’t really matter much.

“Alright.” The silver-robed woman and the other two had no choice but to trust Iyerre. They were going to follow this path to the bitter end.

“The deaths of those five Exalts actually...” As Ji Ning slew those five Sithe Exalts, he could clearly sense that the entire Chaosverse was slightly strengthened after draining away their truesouls. “It actually allowed the Chaosverse to heal. Mm. In the past, when we slew Sithe Exalts their truesouls would return to the Sithe Chaosverse. Those five, however, could not. I completely destroyed their truesouls, transforming their energies into pure life energy.”

“Does that mean... that my power over destruction is also able to nourish the Quintessence of the Chaosverse?” Ning was beginning to get an inkling of what this portended. However, now was not the time for training. It was the time for fighting!

“Slow him down! The three of you, slow him down while I look for an opening,” Iyerre barked mentally.

“Alright.” The three black warbeasts began to circle around Ning, doing their best to impede his movements.

Ning’s six Northbow swords were all filled with the aura of Oblivion, and they completely suppressed the three black warbeasts. Each blasting strike

unleash Oblivion into the bodies of the black warbeasts, causing the three to feel rather miserable. However, their bodies were far stronger than those of most Exalts and so they were fully capable of enduring this. This made it so that for now, Ning was unable to do anything to them.

“These black warbeasts are completely indestructible.” Ning knew how tough these things were. They weren’t a match for him, but they were able to slow him down.

Whoosh! Iyerre unleashed a dazzling burst of light that spread everywhere, while he himself hid within the light to launch repeated sneak attacks against Ning. Ning felt a sense of pressure, as Iyerre was an Omega Autarch who had an even higher level of insight than Ning himself. Although he was now much more powerful than before, those three black warbeasts made it so that he was unable to fully focus on battling Iyerre.

“Hmph. This is my homeland. My power is endless here, but the Sithe? They’re using up energy at a frantic rate. They won’t be able to last.” After realizing that there was no way for him to immediately win, Ning switched to a defensive-oriented strategy.

“Damn.” Iyerre, still seeking an opening, felt his heart sank. Ning was far more powerful than the Sword Titan had been. Ning had three heads and six arms, whereas the Sword Titan only had two arms. Ning was also at a higher level of enlightenment than the Sword Titan. If Ning had furiously pressed the assault, Iyerre might’ve been able to find an opening and exploit it to achieve victory... but now that Ning focused on defense, it was going to be very, very hard to win.

Rumble...

This battle was raging throughout the Grassland World as Ning clashed repeatedly against the Sithe. He dropped from the third layer of clouds to the second layer, then fought all the way back to the fifth layer.

In truth, Ning would’ve been able to leave whenever he wished, but he knew that if he did so then Iyerre probably wouldn’t take on the risk of pursuing him. Thus, he continued to battle them within the Grassland

World!

“Damn, damn, damn!” Iyerre had repeatedly tried to exploit openings, but Ning was so cautious that Iyerre was unable to succeed at all.

“Iyerre, this warbeast isn’t going to last any longer!” the black-robed man sent frantically. “It is almost out of power!”

“What?!” Iyerre was shocked. The three black warbasts would only be able to battle for one hour under normal circumstances. Linked up with Iyerre via formation, they consumed energy even faster! The situation was worsened after the Sword Titan had unleashed that ‘desperation blow’, causing heavy damage to all of them.

It must be remembered that when faced with an enormous attack, even an ‘invulnerable form’ would have to consume a tremendous amount of power to survive it. The same was true for these three black warbeasts! The one which the black-robed man commanded had been the one which absorbed the life-core of the white-furred, red-eyed humanoid. It was comparatively weaker and so its power was the first to run dry.

“I’m out of power! Save me!” the black-robed man sent frantically, his warbeast beginning to flee. Boom! The formerly-stable formation and the black-white light within it began to destabilize. Given his insight, Ning immediately realized what this portended.

“Die!” Ning willed two Northbow swords to fly out, moving far faster than Ning himself could. They instantly crashed onto that black warbeast... and their blows were like the straws that broke the camel’s back. The black warbeast trembled and then began to rapidly dwindle in size, no longer able to stay in war-mode. As it shrank the black-robed man appeared outside of it, his face a mask of terror.

“I need to escape!” The black-robed man wanted to flee through spacetime, but as soon as the spacetime rift appeared next to him those two Northbow swords sliced through both the dimensional tear and his own body.

Whoosh! Both were wiped out. The black-robed man opened his mouth, his eyes filled with shock and resentment, but he was completely

annihilated by the power of this terrifying Oblivion Sword Dao. His true soul fragments were completely devoured.

“Cold noon!” the other two called out frantically.

“Eh?” Ning could clearly sense that the prime essences of the Chaosverse had grown quite a bit more powerful after devouring the black-robed man’s energies. The effect was actually superior to when it had drained those five Sithe Exalts! “All by himself, he vastly surpassed five of those Exalts? Where in the world did he come from?”

Many thoughts flitted through Ning’s mind, but he cast them away and seized this chance to press the attack. He was going to make use of this opportunity to wipe all the Sithe out, sparing no one!

“Flee!” “Let’s flee!”

The silver-robed woman and the red-robed man no longer had any inclination towards continuing the fight. Now that one of them had died, their formation had been destroyed and they were dramatically weakened. To continue fighting would be suicide.

Clang! Clang! The Northbow swords in Ning’s hands shot out once more. This time, all six of them flew out. Four of them flew towards the two remaining black warbeasts, while two chased after the already-fleeing Iyerre.

“It’s over! It’s all over!” Iyerre’s heart was cold and gripped by despair. Although Ning had only taken a single step into the realm of Omega Autarchy, this was his homeland! He was able to unleash an unlimited amount of power here. Now that Iyerre no longer was being supported by that formation, his attacks were too weak even though his techniques were profound. There was simply no way for him to continue battling against Ning.

“I need to go!” Iyerre glanced at the two black warbeasts and the shrunken ‘doll’ which had fallen down to the clouds. Although he ached at the loss, he no longer had the time to prevent it. Swoosh! Iyerre instantly tore through space, warping away and disappearing.

“Die!” The two Northbow swords sliced through the dimensional rift and crushed it, but they were just a moment too late. Ning frowned. “He’s a fast runner!”

Ning knew that for him to kill Iyerre would be extremely difficult, as Iyerre’s level of insight was simply too high. He vastly surpassed Ning in many areas, such as spacetime; it would be very difficult to stop him once he decided to flee. The only way to kill him would be to keep his swords circling around Iyerre, destroying every single spacetime rift the man created. However, Iyerre had been too fast and had perfect control over this battlefield. As soon as things had begun to go south, he had immediately fled.

“It doesn’t matter if he escaped. I’ll get rid of these two first.” Ning charged towards the two remaining black warbeasts.

“Emperor Darknorth! Spare us, spare us!”

“We were forced to do this! This is all because of Iyerre!” The two terrified and fleeing black warbeasts both began to beg for mercy. They knew that thanks to the repeated attacks by the Northbow swords, their own warbeasts were about to run dry as well. They had sought to tear a spatial rift out of the Grassland World and escape, but each time the two Northbow swords would prevent them from doing so.

In truth, even if they did manage to escape, they would remain within the Grassland World! Iyerre, however, had been able to truly escape with ease.

“Spare you? Who ‘spared’ all the cultivators who died?” Ning’s eyes were filled with murder. There was no way he was going to show mercy.

“N-no...”

“Damn that Iyerre!”

The two black warbeasts once more began to shrink and transform into dolls, having used up the last scraps of their energies. The silver-robed woman and the red-robed man were both annihilated by Ning’s sword-light, and their energies were devoured by the Chaosverse.

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Iyerre had frantically warped through spacetime numerous types, fearing that Ning might chase after him. Finally, he reached an empty region in space which was at one of the 'border areas' of the entire Chaosverse. This was a place where many different spacetime continuums were gathered together. There were countless such 'gathering spots', each of which represented the borders between the Chaosverse and the Infinite Void.

Slash! Iyerre waved his hand, causing the void before him to split into two halves and revealing the dazzling sight outside. This was the beautiful, stunning Infinite Void.

Iyerre stepped out, departing from this Chaosverse and entering the Infinite Void. Only then did he finally manage to let out a sigh of relief.

Iyerre turned to look backwards at the awesome, endless celestial object below him. This was the homeland which Ning and his fellow natives belonged to, an enormous Chaosverse. Iyerre had been smitten by it and had gone crazy in an effort to conquer it. This was the Chaosverse which Iyerre had dreamed of controlling for so long.

"Damn. Damn it all." Iyerre was no longer able to calm down, and his eyes were filled with resentment. He had prepared for so long, but he still ended up failing. It had been a complete defeat, and he was the only one to escape and survive.

"I'll go find Master." Iyerre could think of no other solutions. He had to go beg his master for help. He truly didn't wish to accept this defeat.

Whoosh. He began to advance through the vast Infinite Void, headed towards his master's residence.

Chapter 14: The Other Face of Oblivion

Ji Ning picked up the three black dolls, sending his godsense into them to inspect them. He couldn't help but feel rather shocked at the marvelous artifice used to make them. It must be remembered that not even Iyerre himself was able to create these things; they were even more arcane than the Grassland World or the Annihilation Hive.

"I'm actually unable to bind them." Ning tested out binding them, but much like how the Autarch message-talismans could only be used by specific Autarchs, these black dolls could only be used by a preapproved 'list' of people. Iyerre was able to temporarily grant 'usage rights' to the Grassland World to his three allies, but as soon he arrived he was able to take back that right. The same was true for these black dolls!

"Although I can't bind them, I'll still benefit from studying them." Ning waved his hand, putting them away. He stared at the vast Grassland World and at the Golden Bridges which lay fallen within the clouds, his heart rather heavy.

They had won, but the cost had been far, far too great. Iyerre had managed to escape as well. Ning didn't chase after him, because he knew that engaging in a long-distance pursuit was pointless. Iyerre was no fool; the man had undoubtedly fled out of this entire Chaosverse. Besides, as soon as Ning closed in on Iyerre, the latter would undoubtedly notice and would immediately warp through spacetime again, giving Ning no chance to attack at all.

Whoosh. Ning waved a hand, causing two figures to appear next to him. It was Autarch Ekong and Autarch Bolin.

"How did it go, Darknorth?" Ekong and Bolin scanned the area around them.

Ning said rather unhappily, "The other Sithe are all dead, but Iyerre ended up escaping. I was so close! Ugh."

"If he escaped, he escaped." Bolin and Ekong didn't care that much. Bolin said, "His level of insight is simply too high. Killing him will be far,

far too difficult. Although we paid a heavy price to just barely win this battle... we were still the victors! Iyerre has already used up everything he has prepared over all these years. He'll never have the chance to overcome us again."

Autarch Ekong said worriedly, "What if he comes back and tries again?"

"We have the advantage of time. As more time passes, our accumulated power shall increase more and more. We'll even give birth to new Autarchs," Bolin said. "So... if he wishes to come back, he'll need to do so as soon as possible. But the very fact that he chose to flee this critical battle is proof that he's already used up everything he has! Come back? With what!"

Ning agreed with this assessment. If Iyerre was to return, he had to do so with a new source of power! Iyerre had been supported by both the Grassland World and those three black warbeasts which had joined into a formation to support him, but in the end he had still lost both the battle and his allies. What would he use to launch another attack?

"I grieve for Titanos and the others," Ning sighed.

"None of us were afraid of death. So long as we won, death holds no fear for us." Bolin sighed as well. "Our only fear was of losing. Now that we have won, it is enough."

"Hurry up and try to bind the Grassland World," Ning said. "I'm worried that if Iyerre comes back, he'll come straight for the Grassland World first. It probably won't be easy for anyone else to bind."

"Alright." Bolin and Ekong both agreed. Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! The three immediately flew downwards and began to surveil the entire Grassland World.

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Just as Ning had predicted, it was impossible for them to bind the Grassland World. "If we cannot bind it, then let us destroy its quintessence core."

Ning, Bolin, and Ekong stood next to each other within that castle

located deep within the depths of the Grassland World, staring at an indigo globe before them. This indigo globe had returned to its normal state, now that nothing was trying to 'squeeze' more power out of it. Although it was very small, all three could sense the enormous amount of power contained within it.

This quintessence core was extremely important to the Sithe, but it wasn't of much use to the three of them. In their own homeland, they had access to the unlimited power of the Chaosverse itself. There was no need for a puny quintessence core like this.

"Destroy it." Ning struck out with a Northbow sword, sending black sword-light slicing through the air and chopping apart everything in its path. This severing sword-light sliced straight at the distant indigo globe. Although there was some resistance, the sword managed to hack through it. Once the sword reached the very core of that indigo globe, the Oblivion-infused sword-light dramatically flared. The indigo globe first split in half, then suddenly exploded completely due to the power of the sword-light.

Boom! Power swept out in every direction, but thanks to the suppressive effect of the Oblivion Sword Dao, by the time the shockwave reached Ning and the other two it had already weakened down to 1%. The enormous barrier of sword-light circling around them was able to defend against the shockwave with ease.

"I can sense that the prime essences have become considerably stronger after absorbing this power," Ekong said suddenly. "In fact, the prime essences are stronger than ever before."

Ning nodded. "I previously slew five Sithe Exalts and three incredibly strong Sithe. The Chaosverse and the prime essences absorbed all of their energies."

Although the deaths of Titanos and the others had weakened the Chaosverse, the three incredibly strong Sithe killed by Ning had truesouls which were equivalent in 'value' to those of ten Autarchs! Their gains had completely surpasses their losses.

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After they destroyed the quintessence core of the Grassland World, they then headed off to do the same to the sphere of annihilation within the Annihilation Hive.

Bolin and Ekong were both worried that Ning might not be able to accomplish it, but Ning proved them wrong. A single sword infused with the Oblivion Sword Dao was all it took to tear the sphere of annihilation open, destroying all of the mysteries of Oblivion contained within it. In the end, the entire sphere of annihilation collapsed. When it broke apart, it no longer looked like a shadowy orb. It revealed its true appearance, transforming into a tiny, solid-looking ball of light. The ball of light completely exploded, sending a limitless amount of energy blasting in every direction.

When the shockwave spread out, it seemed to cause the Five Elements, spacetime, and more to transform... but in the end, it disappeared without a trace.

“Eh?” Ning murmured softly, “Everything in the sphere of annihilation actually collapsed into a singularity, then exploded... and then it gave birth to one, which gave birth to two, which gave birth to three, which gave birth to all things?”

“The next step to my Sword Dao should be ‘Creation’.”

The Omega Sword Dao. At first, Ning had fused multiple other Daos into his Sword Dao, creating the many other so-called Sword Daos such as the Spacetime Sword Dao, the Cycle Sword Dao, the Karma Sword Dao, etc. Later on, after he meditated on ‘Oblivion’, Ning finally managed to bring the Five Elements, Yin and Yang, the Cycle of Light and Dark, Karma, and Spacetime together, using his will of obliteration to fuse them into a single Dao known as the Oblivion Sword Dao! This was why the Oblivion Sword Dao was so incredibly powerful.

When Ning had used the Oblivion Sword Dao to slay those Sithe, he discovered that after killing them they would transform into pure energy which nourished the Chaosverse. This had instantly intrigued Ning – could it be that the purpose of destruction was actually to provide

nourishment and create new life? However, during the battle Ning didn't have time to really ruminate over this.

Upon seeing the sphere of annihilation collapse, Ning began to gain an even deeper understanding.

"The Dao is split into Yin and Yang. There are two sides to all things. In order for the Omega Sword Dao to reach Autarchy, simply fusing all the other Sword Daos together to create 'Oblivion' isn't enough; that will only display a single facet of the true Autarch Omega Sword Dao. The other face of destruction is the creation of new life. One begets two, two begets three, and three begets all things." [1. The one/two/three thing is deeply embedded in actual Daoism and is far too complicated to explain here.]

Ning exited the Annihilation Hive, then came to the Grassland World once more. The Grassland World had returned to its normal appearance and no longer had a threatening aura.

The nine layers of clouds atop the Grassland World had vanished. Even the grass had vanished, leaving behind a slick, black metal construct. Ning first fashioned a new avatar, then sat down in the lotus position atop the Grassland World and began to meditate.

He was going to wait here. If Iyerre came once more, he would probably head to the Grassland World first. "Bolin. Ekong. I need to meditate silently," Ning said. "As for Iyerre... if he comes, leave him to me."

"Alright." Bolin andn Ekong didn't disturb him.

Ning closed his eyes, beginning to ruminate upon the profound mysteries of the Dao of the Sword. All his other Sword Daos had come together to form a single whole, the Oblivion Sword Dao... but now, the Oblivion Sword Dao was changing and transforming to reveal its other 'face'. The diametric opposite of the Oblivion Sword Dao appeared as the power of destruction slowly began to nurture life. It was as though a 'shell' of utter destruction pervaded this entire Dao, but at its very heart life was slowly being nurtured...

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The Infinite Void. Here, spacetime was far more twisted and distorted than any Chaosverse could ever be. It was filled with enormous celestial objects and countless marvelous species.

Iyerre was hastening through this great void. The first time he had travelled to Ning's Chaosverse he had moved slowly and with great care, but now that he had made multiple round trips he had become quite familiar with the (still-dangerous) path.

Every so often, Iyerre would turn to stare backwards. Although he had travelled a very great distance, the vast Chaosverse behind him still looked endless beyond measure. Only by taking control over it could one truly stand at the very pinnacle of existence within the Infinite Void.

He had spent nine days after exiting the Grassland World before managing to escape that Chaosverse, then two full months before he finally reached the estate where his master's avatar resided.

Chapter 15: Lord of Chaos

Whoosh! Iyerre warped through spacetime, arriving at a giant floating boulder which was many kilometers long. His facial expressions grew markedly more respectful. A small wooden courtyard had been built atop the stone boulder, and in the center was a log cabin. Through the seams in the log cabin, he was able to vaguely make out a skinny, azure-robed form seated in the lotus position within.

The wood cabin and courtyard looked fragile, as though it could be destroyed with the flick of a finger. Iyerre, however, would never dare to offend. Instead he stood outside the courtyard and said respectfully, “Master.”

Inside was his master, a truly legendary figure. He was amongst the first Sithe who rose to power, and he quickly outstripped all others by a wide margin. Countless Sithe venerated his very existence, and he eventually came to control his entire Chaosverse.

Iyerre had been the very second Omega Autarch in his homeland, but he still felt that his master far surpassed him in many regards.

“You failed?” The voice was gentle and warm.

“I failed. Completely failed.” Iyerre’s mood was rather downcast. “The subordinates I brought with me were either killed or captured. It was a complete and total defeat. I’m the only one who managed to escape.”

“A pity about those three Sourcewalkers. It wasn’t easy for them to reach their level,” the person instead sighed. “Each of them was formed from the concentrated essence of my Chaosverse. Reviving them won’t be easy.”

Iyerre didn’t dare to say a word. Long ago, he and his master had come to an agreement. His master had carved out a large chunk of their entire Chaosverse and gave it to Iyerre to rule as he saw fit! All of the Sithe who rose to power within that part of the Chaosverse would be under his control, and he would be permitted to use them to invade other Chaosverses! However, there were two exceptions to this – Sourcewalker Autarchs and Omega Emperors.

An Omega Emperor had the potential to become an Omega Autarch. His master would take all such figures away! Thus, not a single Omega Emperor had joined the war against Ji Ning's Chaosverse.

Sourcewalkers were the treasured darlings of the Chaosverses. The amount of energy they contained in their bodies vastly surpassed all their peers, and after reaching Autarchy they grew to be far more powerful! They completely surpassed all the other Exalts. The silver-robed woman and the other two had been Sourcewalker Autarchs. Iyerre felt that he needed to strengthen his forces, and so he had summoned his courage and asked for his master to transfer them to his command.

Even though Sourcewalker Autarchs were unable to summon the power of the Dao in Ning's Chaosverse, they were still on par with Titanos and Mogg in power! This was why they were able to truly make use of the power of the black warbeasts.

Now, all of them were dead. Even their truesouls had been devoured. His master, as the Lord of Chaos, had access to unbelievable abilities and would still be able to revive them, but this process would consume the energies of the prime essences! Their deaths had already caused the prime essences of the Sithe Chaosverse to weaken; to bring them back would weaken the prime essences a second time.

"It was all due to my uselessness." Iyerre lowered his head.

"How did you lose?" the gentle, warm voice asked.

"It was because of an Omega Emperor named Emperor Darknorth," Iyerre explained immediately. "I was at the verge of victory. I could see it right in front of me! But at that critical moment between life and death... perhaps because all of his civilization rested on his shoulders... Emperor Darknorth went completely berserk and actually managed to upgrade his Omega Sword Dao to become the Oblivion Sword Dao."

"He probably reached the threshold long ago, but needed a little extra push. The pressure of his entire civilization about to collapse drove him across that final barrier, allowing him to take one step into Omega Autarchy." The warm voice was rather surprised. "You can't be blamed for

your defeat. Now that he has taken this step, becoming an Omega Autarch is nothing more than a matter of time. He'll eventually realize that 'Oblivion' is just one face of his Autarch Omega Sword Dao. He'll come to understand what the other face is and then act accordingly. Haha... finally, a second Chaoslord has arisen within the nine Chaosverses."

"Master, am I really supposed to just give up?" Iyerre said desperately, "There are only eight Chaosverses aside from our own. Emperor Darknorth's was the weakest of the eight, and I know more about it than any of the others. If I have to give up on it, I'll have no chance at all."

There were nine Chaosverses in total. The Sithe had given birth to one Lord of Chaos, but the other eight Chaosverses had not. Iyerre had chosen Ning's Chaosverse as his target because it was weak. The other seven were all stronger, and over the course of years they had only grown even more powerful.

"Yes, all of them are very powerful," that gentle voice said. "The seven remaining Chaosverses... even the weakest has at least twelve Autarchs, while the strongest has thirty-nine Autarchs and five Omega Emperors."

"Although Emperor Darknorth has taken one step into Omega Autarchy, it'll take some time for him to take the final step," Iyerre said hurriedly. "If he doesn't realize that there's another side to Oblivion, he'll be stuck there for even longer! I need to seize every moment and press the counter-attack. His homeland only has two Autarchs left, aside from Emperor Darknorth. Emperor Darknorth is the only impediment. Once we destroy him, we'll have won." Iyerre's gaze was filled with desperation.

"Win?" The voice turned cold. "And how do you think you will win?"

"That's why I've come to ask you for help, Master." Iyerre said hurriedly, "If you concur, we'll still be able to win thanks to your many Exalts, your Omega Emperors, and your treasures." He didn't dare to even ask for his master to risk invading Ning's Chaosverse in person. No Lord of Chaos could possibly be foolish enough to risk his own life in another Chaosverse.

"Hmph!" The voice inside turned rather angry. "Iyerre, I gave you nearly

30% of my entire Chaosverse to administer, but you still failed. Now, you even wish for the children under my rule to risk their lives for you?"

"I'll bring them back to life after they die," Iyerre said hurriedly.

"Back to life? How will you make up for that enormous loss of energy? There's no way I will permit my Chaosverse to be weakened that much. Iyerre, you need to know when to stop!" His master truly was becoming angry. Now that Ning had mastered the Oblivion Sword Dao, the truesouls of the Sithe he killed would be unable to return to the Sithe Chaosverse. As a result, the Sithe Chaosverse was being steadily weakened.

Send more Exalts over to Ning's Chaosverse? It was entirely possible that if their Chaosverse was weakened to a certain extent, Emperor Darknorth would lead an invasion after he became a Lord of Chaos!

If two Chaosverses were fairly close to each other in power, neither would be able to do anything to the other. But if one side was much weaker than the other? It was possible for a Chaosverse to be defeated!

"And that place remains Emperor Darknorth's home. You have probably already lost the Grassland World and the Annihilation Hive. Without them, sending in more Exalts would be pointless. They would simply die," Iyerre's master said.

Iyerre fell silent.

"If you are truly determined to the point of risking death... there may be hope," his master said suddenly.

"Risking death?" Iyerre's eyes lit up.

"I have one treasure, a protective treasure which I created after countless aeons of hard work. It will allow you to ignite the majority of your truesoul and pour it inside to unleash a supremely powerful skill. With this treasure, you stand a chance at gaining victory," his master said. "But this treasure does have a flaw. When you use it, you'll suffer from an enormous backlash. If you win the battle, you'll be able to slowly recover... but if you lose, you'll probably be killed by Emperor Darknorth on the spot."

“Are you willing?” his master asked.

“I am willing! I’m willing to die in my attempts to take that final step and reach the true apex of cultivation. What’s the point of living without hope?” Iyerre gritted his teeth.

“One more thing. If you fail, remember to destroy this treasure instead of letting it fall into Darknorth’s hand,” his master said. “I imagine you lost the warbeasts I gave you?”

“I lost them. Don’t worry, Master. If I fail, I won’t let Emperor Darknorth acquire this protective treasure,” Iyerre said calmly. If it fell into Ning’s hands, Ning would be able to learn from it.

Suddenly, a strange medallion flew over to Iyerre, who caught it. This medallion was palm-sized and very heavy. Even Iyerre felt some pressure from its weight, as though it was actually an entire world he was holding. The medallion’s surface was covered with black and white diagrams, with the two sides being black and the center being white. It was like there were two tall black mountains parted by a white gorge or a white river. It seemed almost sentient, and Iyerre immediately bound it to him.

“Incredible.” As soon as he bound it, he understood just how formidable and valuable this treasure was. In terms of preciousness, it was actually superior to both the Annihilation Hive and the Grassland World. It lived up to its reputation as a treasure which his master had personally kept for protection.

His master was now truly invincible, while he himself had been driven to utter despair. This was the only reason why his master had been willing to gift him even a protective treasure of such value. It represented the crystallized essence of his master’s boundless wisdom, which was why his master had instructed him to destroy it if he failed the battle.

“Thank you, Master,” Iyerre said excitedly. He couldn’t help but ask, “What is it called?”

The voice inside fell silent for a moment, then said slowly, “It is called the Stele of Mountains and Rivers.”

“The Stele of Mountains and Rivers?” Iyerre stared at the tablet in his palm, then nodded slowly.

“Be off, then. Shoo.”

Iyerre immediately bowed respectfully and gratefully once more, then turned to leave. He needed to seize every moment. Although he felt that it was likely that Ning wouldn’t be able to quickly understand the opposite side of Oblivion and thus would be stuck there for a long period of time, he wanted to give himself the best chance possible and launch his counter-attack quickly.

After spending two more months in travel, he reached Ning’s Chaosverse once more. After entering it, he began to warp through spacetime to the location of the Grassland World, which is where they had fought earlier.

“He’s going to die, and I’m going to win.” Iyerre hurried forth.

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The only thing left in the Grassland World was that black metallic tower. The white-robed Ning sat by himself next to that black tower, the flow of time around him markedly different from that of the outside world.

Ning’s mind was filled with the secrets of the Dao of the Sword, which continued to transform and multiply. It was the opposite of what Iyerre had expected. As soon as Ning had mastered the Oblivion Sword Dao, he had immediately realized that there was another face to destruction and knew what path he had to take.

His mind was filled with the boundless power of the Oblivion Sword Dao, and the new life which it nurtured. As time flowed on, the vital energy birthed by his Oblivion Sword Dao grew more and more powerful.

Boom! One day, the boundless vitality at the core of his Oblivion Sword Dao reached such a level where it finally exploded! The darkness of oblivion instantly vanished, leaving behind nothing save for a dazzling, pure pulse of vital energy. Boundless amounts of vital energy swept out in every direction, resulting in space and time being born, things dividing

into Yin and Yang, the Five Elements arising, and finally karma emerging to link them all together. Even the boundless vital energy was affected by karma, and so karma tied it together. The Five Elements came together while Yin and Yang tangled around each other, and all of them combined with that vital energy to give birth to one new creature after another.

The stars were born. The emptiness of space was born. Planets were born with verdant life, flowers, and bugs. With but a thought, entire worlds were created.

“In the end, all Daos come together to form the singularity known as Omega, which I express through my Omega Sword Dao.” Now that he fully understood the other face of Oblivion, Ning’s second foot stepped past the threshold of Omega Autarchy as well.

Whoosh. The dazzling Flower of Eternity at the very peak of the towering Dao-tree within Ning’s Jindan chaos region gradually began to wither... but as it did so, a fruit was growing from within it. As the fruit grew, it began to assume a humanoid shape. It was filled with boundless sword-intent that only grew denser and denser... until finally, the fruit took full form.

This fruit was humanoid in shape and looked exactly like Ning himself. It was seated in the lotus position, a smile on its face.

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The entire Grassland World began to stir and shudder as a boundless amount of energy began to converge upon it. Ning’s body was beginning to transform, while his consciousness expanded dramatically. It now filled every single inch of the entire Chaosverse, resonating with the prime essences of the Chaosverse. He could sense that the prime essences were crying out in joy and celebration. His will naturally became one with every part of the Quintessence, not facing any resistance at all. He was now able to bind it whenever he chose.

“So this is the true nature and appearance of the prime essences?” Ning was intoxicated by it all.

Chapter 16: The End (Part 1)

Ji Ning was now able to clearly see the true appearance of the entire Quintessence for the first time. The Quintessence was formed of countless Eternal Omega Daos, with the Eternal Omega Sword Dao merely being one of them. The other Eternal Omega Daos included the Eternal Omega Karma Dao, the Eternal Omega Time Dao, the Eternal Omega Space Dao, the Eternal Omega Spacetime Dao, the Eternal Omega Metal Dao, the Eternal Omega Water Dao, the Eternal Omega Samsara Dao, the Eternal Omega Five Elements Dao...

All of them were Eternal Omega Daos. They were all the same level, but some were stronger than the others. All of them were linked together and influenced each other, coming together to form an instinctive reaction which would cause the Chaosverse to function in accordance with certain rules!

“All things are linked, as are all Daos.” After understanding the Autarch Omega Sword Dao, Ning had reached the stage of the so-called ‘Daobirth’! Ning was now in control of the Eternal Omega Daos for all other Daos, including spacetime, life and death, and more. This was what had made Iyerre so very powerful. His expertise lay in the Dao of Light, but he had reached the Eternal Omega Dao level in all other Daos as well. This was why he had surpassed all of them in employing spacetime!

However, there was fairness in all things. If you wished to become a Lord of Chaos, you generally had to be the very first Omega Autarch within a Chaosverse. The first one would have no guidance from anyone else and have to fight through a thorn-laden path in order to succeed. His path would be harder than anyone else’s, and he was worthier than any others.

As for the second Omega Autarch? Now that a precursor had shown the way, the difficulty of becoming an Omega Autarch would drop tenfold or even more. If the second Omega Autarch wished to become a Chaoslord, he would have to invade another Chaosverse... but in doing so, he would be suppressed and rejected, unable to use even a sliver of the Dao’s power. This was an incredibly difficult task.

“The prime essences aren’t truly sentient, nor are the various Daos truly merged together.” Ning let out a sigh. The Quintessence was formed from multiple independent Eternal Omega Daos.

As for Ning? Not only did he control multiple Eternal Omega Daos, he was also in control of a truly complete and perfect Autarch Omega Sword Dao. In terms of insight, he surpassed the entire Quintessence. This was why he was qualified to bind it! The prime essences themselves were celebrating his rise. They didn’t reject him at all. In fact, they were looking forward to Ning binding them!

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“What a huge disturbance.”

“What’s going on?”

Autarch Bolin and Autarch Ekong were off in the distance, training silently. Both turned to stare at the Grassland World, then traded glances. They quickly warped through spacetime towards the Grassland World.

Rumble... a boundless amount of energy was gathering around the Grassland World. The energy was transforming Ning’s body, causing his heartworld to expand.

Bolin and Ekong were unable to even see Ning, who was at the center of that absolute maelstrom of energy.

“I’ve never seen such an enormous flood of energy before. I feel as though the prime essences are pouring all of their power into this place.” Bolin let out a sigh of joy. “Darknorth seems to have broken through into Autarchy.”

“Haha, he must have become an Omega Autarch! Otherwise, why would there be such a huge disturbance?” Ekong was excited as well. “This is wonderful. Our civilization has finally given birth to our own Lord of Chaos! It seems as though we’ll never have to worry about being invaded again.” They had been under the constant threat of invasion for countless aeons. It had weighed upon them very, very heavily. Even though they had beaten back the Sithe twice, if they didn’t gain their own Lord of Chaos

they would probably suffer more invasions in the future.

Only a Lord of Chaos would grant them true freedom.

“Finally, someone has succeeded. Brother Titanos, brother Mogg... Stonerule and Skyfeeder... can you see this?” Bolin murmured.

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Ning’s mind gazed upon the entire Quintessence. He had become one with it, and he could sense every single thing within the entire vast Chaosverse. Thus, Ning was able to sense Iyerre as soon as he entered the Chaosverse and began to warp towards the Grassland World.

“Iyerre actually came back already? Judging from that look in his eyes and his posture, he looks like he’s ready to battle to the death. He must have something which he thinks gives him a shot at it.” Ning continued to watch carefully.

Given his current power as an Omega Autarch, even if he didn’t bind the Chaosverse he was still able to summon enough power from the Dao to kill Iyerre with ease!

“I’ll bind it first.” Since Iyerre had entered the Chaosverse, he wouldn’t be able to escape.

Whoosh. Ning’s mind entered the Quintessence and began to bind it to himself. He didn’t suffer any pushback at all. Everything happened smoothly.

Rumble... the various Daos that had been functioning automatically within the Quintessence suddenly began to transform. Previously, they had functioned in accordance with how the other Daos influenced them. Now that Ning had bound them, they changed in accordance with Ning’s will. All of the other Eternal Omega Daos began to swirl around the newly-emerged and towering ‘Autarch Omega Sword Dao’ that had appeared within their midst.

Rumble... the Autarch Omega Sword Dao became the new foundation of this entire Chaosverse, with all other Daos serving to support and reinforce it. In this instance, the Chaosverse gained a new ‘soul’.

The white-robed Ning arose from his position within the Grassland World. He took a single step forwards, appearing within the center of the Quintessence.

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Far away, atop an enormous boulder that hovered within the Infinite Void. A skinny figure suddenly pushed open the door to the wooden room atop the boulder, emerging from it. His skin was dark, he had a pair of horns on his head, and he was dressed in azure robes. His unfathomably deep eyes gazed towards the direction of Ning's Chaosverse, a stunned look on his face.

"This..." He could clearly sense what had just happened. The vast aura of that incomparably massive Chaosverse had suddenly changed. Its previously expansive aura had suddenly condensed and stabilized, in the end transforming into a terrifying sword-intent. This was the aura of an Autarch Omega Sword Dao! It was supremely venerable and peerlessly offensive. That Chaosverse was like an honest, amiable person who had turned into a terrifying killer swordsman.

"Autarch Omega Sword Dao. The Dao of the Sword is a Dao meant for attacking." The azure-robed horned man frowned. "I never would've thought that the second Lord of Chaos would be such a troublesome figure. Iyerre truly is a fool."

There were differences amongst Eternal Omega Daos. The same was true for Autarch Omega Daos.

Ning's Dao of the Sword was meant for combat. It was not a Dao to be taken lightly! This was why the azure-robed man had immediately bestowed his own protective treasure, the 'Stele of Mountains and Rivers', to Iyerre upon learning that Ning had already mastered the power of Oblivion. He himself knew that he had been the one who had aided Iyerre in forging the Annihilation Hive and the Grassland World. Given that so many Exalts had perished, with even the Sourcewalker Autarchs dying, he knew that sending in more forces would be useless!

"In the end, we weren't able to forestall his rise." The horned, azure-

robed figure shook his head. “And Darknorth truly is crafty. He only began the binding process after Iyerre entered his Chaosverse.”

The horned figure stared at the towering Chaosverse, now emanating an awesome aura of the Dao of the Sword. He felt a headache coming.

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Ning had been able to easily bind the Quintessence of the Chaosverse without encountering any resistance at all. After becoming an Omega Autarch, Ning had restructured his mana in accordance with his Autarch Omega Sword Dao, while his soul had undergone a qualitative transformation. There had been a bit of pressure when he began to bind the Chaosverse, but Ning was able to endure that pressure with ease. After he completed the binding, the pressure disappeared.

The vast Chaosverse was now like his own body, with all of its Daos available for him to command. Everything within the Chaosverse was under his control, including all of space and time.

Ning turned to gaze off into the distance. His gaze pierced through space and time, allowing him to see every single creature who had ever lived within this Chaosverse, including recently-deceased figures like Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg and even long-dead figures like Autarch Awakener and Autarch Entropos. He also saw figures from the Three Realms like Lord Tathagata the Buddha, Daoist Three Purities, Shennong, Suiren, Fuxi, and also his beloved Yu Wei.

Some of their truesouls had been shattered, while others had even their truesoul fragments destroyed. Ning, however, was capable of reviving them all.

When he gazed into the past he was able to see their truesouls with clarity, even if their truesouls were shattered. He would be able to reform them from the void itself, recreating them.

“I’m even able to revive those whose truesoul fragments were destroyed?” Ning was absolutely delighted. “I’m virtually omnipotent in my own Chaosverse.”

Previously Ning and the others had all believed that those who had lost their truesoul could not be revived, but that was because none of them had any experience actually being a Lord of Chaos. They had no idea as to just how truly incredible a Chaoslord was.

Within their own Chaosverses, Lords of Chaos were able to connect past, present, and future together. There was almost nothing they could not do.

“Oh. I’m not truly omnipotent.” Ning suddenly came to this realization. “I still can’t see through Iyerre’s soul and truesoul.”

He was able to see through the souls and truesouls of all other living beings, which meant he was able to understand and replicate them... but Iyerre’s truesoul was constructed based on the Autarch Omega Light Dao. Ning didn’t understand the Autarch Omega Light Dao, and so he wouldn’t be able to create a soul based off of it. By the same principle, the Sithe Lord of Chaos was also incapable of recreating Iyerre’s truesoul.

“If I killed Iyerre... the Sithe Chaoslord wouldn’t be able to bring him back?” A cold, murderous look flashed through Ning’s eyes.

Whoosh! Ning took a step forwards, immediately appearing within Iyerre’s region.

.....

Iyerre was still in the process of warping through spacetime at maximum speed, his heart burning with impatience.

“If I win, I’ll be the master of this Chaosverse.” Iyerre was filled with eagerness. Suddenly... “Eh? What’s going on? W-why can’t I warp through spacetime any longer?” Iyerre turned pale. Spacetime had suddenly turned incredibly stable around him, making it impossible for him to tear through it.

A white-robed youth with a black sheath on his back suddenly appeared out of nowhere. He said in a cold voice, “Iyerre!”

A terrifying aura of might descended, completely surrounding and freezing Iyerre in his tracks. Iyerre could no longer even move a finger. He

stared at the distant Ning in horror: “Y-you already...”

“Yes. I’ve already bound my homeland to myself. From this day forward, I shall be the one to protect it,” Ning said coldly.

“Fellow Daoist!” A voice suddenly rang out from afar, traversing past spacetime and reaching out all the way to Ning’s Chaosverse.

Now that Ning had already bound this Chaosverse, he was able to sense this voice. He turned to stare off into the distance, the ‘membrane’ surrounding the Chaosverse no longer able to bar his gaze. He stared through spacetime and deep into the Infinite Void, following the reverberations of the voice to find its source. He saw a skinny, horned, azure-robed figure standing atop a giant boulder. The horned figure had a warm gaze and a smile on his face. “Fellow Daoist, please spare my disciple’s life.”

Within Ning’s Chaosverse. Ning turned his cold gaze back to Iyerre, his endless aura of might having completely suppressed the Omega Autarch. Iyerre wasn’t able to move so much as a finger. He couldn’t even blink or speak.

“Die,” Ning said coldly.

Whoosh! Iyerre was still staring fixedly at Ning, but his body began to completely break apart. Even his soul was completely disintegrated, transforming into pure energy which was absorbed by the Chaosverse. This surge of energy was so tremendous that it surpassed the combined energies of a hundred ordinary Autarchs. The entire Chaosverse’s aura strengthened noticeably.

Omega Autarch Iyerre. Dead!

“Fellow Daoist!” The distant horned man atop the giant boulder in the Infinite Void could sense his Chaosverse weakening dramatically. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh. “

Was that really necessary? You are already a Lord of Chaos and can revive all those who died. Why did you have to...”

“You wanted to save him?” Ning remained within his Chaosverse, and

his own voice echoed out into the Infinite Void and into the ears of the horned man. The horned man could sense the icy hostility in Ning's voice.

“You wanted to save him? But if he had won, all living creatures in our entire civilization would have perished. Who would have come to save us?”

Ning's icy, hostile voice continued to echo within the horned man's ears. “And, Sithe Chaoslord... are you going to tell me that you didn't help him with his schemes? Don't try to play innocent in front of me.”

Chapter 17: The End (Part 2)

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth, I admit that I did act in a rather untoward fashion, but the path of cultivation is an inherently selfish path. We fight our way to the top, do we not? Your Chaosverse was the weakest of all Chaosverses, so my disciple naturally chose to try and make it his own. The war is now over, and he is dead. You are now a Lord of Chaos. Let us let bygones be bygones. What do you say?”

The horned, azure-robed man completely understood how Ji Ning was feeling right now, and so he continued to speak in a gentle and friendly voice, “You now stand at the very peak of civilization, after all. We each are in control of our respective Chaosverses, and neither of us can do anything to the other. What’s the point of holding grudges?”

Ning let out a cold snort, then retracted his gaze and broke the link. The horned man just chuckled, not angry in the slightest.

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The white-robed Ning stood within the emptiness of space, staring at the treasures which the deceased Iyerre had left behind. He used his godsense to sweep through all of the treasures and inspect them. “Given that Iyerre dared to return, he probably had something he was counting on.”

“Oh. Was it this tablet?” Ning discovered the Stele of Mountains and Rivers. It looked quite ordinary, but when Ning gave it a closer inspection he was rather startled. The internal intricacies made him sigh in amazement. “This should have been created by the Sithe Lord of Chaos. Otherwise, Iyerre would’ve used it long ago. It truly is incredible. This Lord of Chaos is an absolute marvel when it comes to artificing, and this item is of some use to me.”

The black warbeasts had little meaning for Ning, but the Stele of Mountains and Rivers was of fairly significant use.

“This stele can allow me to instantly release an enormous amount of mana in a terrifying strike that vastly surpasses my normal maximums. Incredible. Although I cannot bind it, it’ll still be of great use to me in

improving my own artificing skills.” Ning willed the six Northbow swords on his back to all enter his heartworld. By now, his vast heartworld was completely identical to the real world.

Within the heartworld, Ning could make anything ‘real’ with but a thought. He could even manufacture a hundred or more Northbow swords in the blink of an eye, but he would have to pay an enormous price in energy!

Rumble. The Northbow swords began to transform within the heartworld. Everything was as Ning willed it to be. He first transformed their quintessences into his Autarch Omega Sword Dao, then remade the physical properties of the swords as well, infusing some of the insights he had gained from the Stele of Mountains and Rivers into his Northbow swords. At critical moments, his swords would now be able to unleash incredible attacks that vastly surpassed their normal might. Although the difference wasn’t as ridiculous as that granted by the Stele of Mountains and Rivers, it still replicated 30% of the effect.

In that same instant, his avatar began to remake the Northmoon swords within its own heartworld. His avatar had been reinforced and nourished by the power of the entire Chaosverse and was thus at 80% of the true Ning’s power.

“I’m a Lord of Chaos, but I have yet to really explore the outside world. I can only relax after fully understanding this universe.” Ning was a bit nervous from the repeated invasions, and so he was filled with wariness and vigilance towards the outside world.

He would send his avatar out, rather than his true body. The Sithe Lord of Chaos only had an avatar in the outside world as well. Their avatars had roughly 80% of their full power, and once they died they could swiftly be remade. They were perfect for sending out and exploring.

“Let’s take a look and see what mysteries the Infinite Void holds within it.” The sword-bearing golden-robed Ning exited his Chaosverse.

The golden-robed Ning began to wander through the endlessly dazzling Infinite Void. This place was filled with distorted spacetime and many

enormous celestial objects, as well as countless strange beings. When they encountered the golden-robed Ning, they were filled with utter terror. This was merely Ning's avatar, but it carried with it the mighty aura of an entire Chaosverse. This was why Lords of Chaos were so terrifying and why Iyerre was so desperate to become one. A single glance from them was enough to suppress and kill an Omega Autarch. The difference in power was simply too great.

"There are a total of nine Chaosverses, and they are the largest of celestial objects here. The others are all much smaller. Countless celestial objects, scattered throughout the Infinite Void... and spacetime here is completely chaotic." The golden-robed Ning began to understand. "It's just too large, and every single spacetime continuum is different. I could spend ten million chaos cycles exploring without being able to fully investigate the entire Infinite Void. The Infinite Void is also changing constantly; there's no point in even trying."

"My homeland and the enormous Chaosverses... where did they come from?" If he wasn't able to investigate the entire Infinite Void, he wanted to at least understand his own past and the source of the Chaosverses.

Whoosh. Ning stared off into the distance. The enormous Chaosverse that was his home was within his field of vision, as was another vast Chaosverse. Chaosverses were so enormous that they loomed large from even incredible distances.

"Reverse." Ning willed time to flow backwards. Rumble... time quickly came to a halt and began to reverse, displaying the countless scenes that had occurred in the past. This sort of 'temporal inversion' technique generally required very little energy. In the Three Realms, even weak Immortals and Fiendgods were capable of using such a technique. However, he was applying the technique to an absolutely enormous region which covered two Chaosverses, resulting in a similarly tremendous expenditure of energy. His own energies were rapidly depleted, but the prime energies of his Chaosverse sent more and more to him.

This was another reason why Chaoslords were so incredible. They could unleash as much power as they wanted! So long as they didn't unleash

more power than their Chaosverses' would naturally regenerate, they essentially had access to truly unlimited energy. Their Chaosverses would also draw upon energy from the Infinite Void at an incredible rate.

"Faster, faster! I want to see more!" The golden-robed Ning stared towards the two Chaosverses as time continued to reverse.

Boom! Suddenly, Ning saw those two distant Chaosverses explode. "Eh?!" Ning immediately halted the temporal inversion.

It wasn't an actual explosion. Time continued to slowly flow forwards, allowing Ning to view everything clearly. The actual scene... was of countless different streams of matter and energy slowly coming together to form an enormous Chaosverse!

"So the Chaosverses were actually formed by countless amounts of matter and energy coming together?" Ning nodded. This made sense. He continued the temporal inversion.

"Eh?" Suddenly, Ning noticed something special. The matter and energy which had 'exploded' outwards came together to form many celestial objects of various size, with the nine Chaosverses being the largest. "So all matter actually came from that direction over there?" Ning immediately turned his gaze to the location where all this matter had come from.

Time inverted at the point where he focused his gaze, staring at the place where all this matter had come from.

Once, long ago, a single absolutely enormous landmass had existed across an incredibly wide area within the Infinite Void. This landmass was absolutely, inconceivably sized. It vastly surpassed any Chaosverse.

"What an enormous landmass! Is this where everything came from?" the golden-robed Ning immediately began to move closer to that region.

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"Ah. He's discovered it?" The thin, horned man atop that levitating boulder watched from afar. When Ning began to move towards the location where that landmass had been, the horned man's heart clenched. He then immediately began to warp over there as well.

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When Ning arrived at the location of the vast landmass, time began to reverse once more. The scenes of what had once occurred within that vast landmass began to replay in front of Ning. This world had been far vaster than any Chaosverse, and it also held far more living beings within it, including countless living beings and countless races.

“How lively.” Ning watched the lives of those countless beings being replayed before him.

BOOM! Suddenly, the vast landmass began to crack apart.

“You traitors! TRAITORS!” A towering, black-robed emperor who emanated an aura of incredible power was surrounded by over a hundred figures of tremendous might. These figures all had different appearances, including both humans and beasts, and their blows were filled with incredible strength.

“Traitors? You enslaved us! Should all of our hard work been meant for nothing save to serve as your eternal slaves?”

“Haha... you thought that the seal you placed on our truesouls would enable you to control us unto our deaths. You fool! In the end, you are nothing more than this continent’s will incarnate. You are no true cultivator! You have no idea how formidable Omega Autarchs are. We escaped your control long ago. We simply put on an act and bided our time!”

“We’ve been waiting for so long, while brother Heavencloud poured all his effort into creating this Grand Armageddon Formation to deal with you!”

Although Ning didn’t understand what the experts of this era were saying, through watching the battle he was able to tell what level the hundred-plus experts were at, as well as the black-robed emperor’s level.

“What?!” Ning was shocked by the battle occurring before him. “The attackers are all Omega Autarchs!”

There were a total of 129 experts attacking the black-robed emperor, and

all of them were Omega Autarchs. They had joined together into an incredibly complex formation. Even though Ning was also an Omega Autarch, he felt that he was incapable of truly understanding it. He had the vague feeling that it had probably been created by someone who had reached Omega Autarchy via the Dao of Formations. This was why the formation was able to allow over a hundred Omega Autarchs to fuse their energies together perfectly.

“How can there be this many Omega Autarchs?” Ning was rather stunned. “Although each blow from that black-robed emperor is filled with awesome power, he’s actually at a lower level of insight than them. He doesn’t seem to be an Omega Autarch. He’s at a lower level, yet can contend with 129 of them by himself?”

Whoosh. A second figure warped through spacetime and appeared next to Ning. It was the horned, azure-robed man.

“You?” Ning glanced at him.

“This is our first time actually meeting, I believe.” The horned man smiled. “I am Alphan of the Sithe Chaosverse.”

Ning blinked. He suddenly realized that his Chaosverse didn’t have a name yet. There were nine of them, after all; it wouldn’t be appropriate to keep calling his ‘the Chaosverse’. What name should he choose for it?

Ning thought back to his homeland, of the many living beings who had struggled within the Chaosverse to clamber upwards on the path of cultivation. So many forerunners had helped clear the way, cutting their way through thistles and thorns as they blazed a path through the wilderness. Their efforts had finally culminated in Ning’s success, allowing their Chaosverse to enter a new stage of development.

“Desolate Chaosverse, Ji Ning.” Ning looked at the horned man.

“Desolate... Ji Ning?” the horned man murmured softly.

“Why have you come here?” Ning felt nothing but ill-will towards this horned man, and so he came straight to the point.

The horned man pointed at the scene of the great battle which had

occurred in the past. “In this era, the vast landmass before us ended up being destroyed by the battle we are now watching. After breaking apart, its energy and its matter ended up forming many celestial objects within the Infinite Void, with the largest being our nine Chaosverses.”

Ning simply listened.

“That black-robed emperor was the continent’s will incarnate. Its Quintessence was far more powerful than those in our Chaosverses, and as a result it reached a level of such power that it actually gained true sentience,” the horned man said. “The will of the landmass governed itself and all of the living beings with it. Once a cultivator succeeded in the Daomerge and broke through to become an Eternal Emperor, it would set down a seal upon that cultivator’s truesoul which allowed it to take full control over that cultivator’s life and death.

“Since it was nothing more than a psychic being which arose from the prime essences, it only understood the various Eternal Omega Daos. It didn’t understand what an Autarch Omega Dao was! However, it had the power of the entire continent behind it, and so it remained invincible.

“More and more living beings arose within this continent. Omega Autarchs eventually began to rise, but even after reaching Omega Autarchy they were still unable to extricate themselves from that seal. One... two... three... more and more Omega Autarchs began to appear. Finally, an incredibly powerful Omega Autarch managed to devise a method to solve the seal, and he secretly passed it over to the other Omega Autarchs.”

Ning continued to listen silently.

“Look. That’s him over there.” The horned man pointed towards a white-haired man who was amongst the attackers. “His name was Grand Sovereign Crimson Wind, and he was one of nine Grand Sovereigns under the command of that black-robed emperor who was responsible for helping the emperor manage the entire landmass. He was the one who solved the seal.”

“Later, the Omega Autarch of Formations known as Heavencloud

managed to develop an absolutely terrifying formation, the 'Grand Armageddon Formation'." The horned man pointed at another man who was bald. "He was the black-robed emperor's Sentinel for the seventh universe."

"Seventh universe?" Ning suddenly said.

"You might not have noticed yet, but that landmass actually has a total of thirty-two universes circling around it. Each of them is roughly on par with our own Chaosverses in size," the horned man said.

Ning said, "You know quite a lot."

"Haha, I've inverted time to watch the history of this era before us on many an occasion. I've even learned their language," the horned man chuckled. "By now, I'm familiar with all of these Omega Autarchs and their backgrounds. I even know how they each rose to power and what they experienced. I can't help but sigh. The end result of that battle was the maddened emperor destroying the entire landmass and causing all of the Omega Autarchs to die with him."

Ning saw it as well. That final, great explosion... it had claimed the lives of that terrifying psychic being and all 129 Omega Autarchs. In fact, all the living beings on that landmass had died, while the thirty-two universes orbiting it had been annihilated as well. It had been an absolutely enormous explosion! The entire Infinite Void had been wiped clean of all life thanks to that explosion.

As Ning listened to the horned man speak, he continued to watch the temporal inversion and see the history of this land. The great landmass had been around for far too long. As Ning continued to watch backwards he gradually began to learn and understand its language, and he also began to grow familiar with the deceased Omega Autarchs.

For example, the black-robed emperor's Sentinel for the nineteenth universe had been named Autarch Cloudsoar. He had also been an Autarch of the Omega Sword Dao.

The black-robed emperor's Sentinel for the third universe, 'Autarch Yin-Yang', had been an incomparably muscular old bull whose body was

completely black.

The various experts all had their own areas of expertise.

“Thankfully, in my homeland the ‘will’ of the Quintessence simply acts on instinct, rather than gaining a sense of self and thus becoming a true living being.” The more Ning saw, the more frightened he became. All living beings on that continent had been slaves to the black-robed emperor, unable to extricate themselves until the day of the final battle.

Time continued to flow backwards to the earliest days before life had even arisen. There, the temporal inversion came to a halt. It was impossible to go backwards any farther.

“You’ve reached the end. Time can no longer move backwards,” the horned man said.

Ning nodded. All the images before him vanished, and the space in front of him went back to normal.

“Eh?” Ning stared in front of him, only to see that a universe had appeared in the location where that vast landmass had been. The universe was slowly draining energy and matter from the surrounding area. Clearly, it was still in the growing phase and had yet to truly form.

Swish! The golden-robed Ning took a step forwards, appearing before that universe.

“Ji Ning.” The horned man’s heart clenched as he immediately followed from behind.

Ning’s godsense instantly swept out to enter the slowly-forming universe. Inside, he saw nothing but raw chaos. There was no life within it at all. “How odd. The old era ended long ago, while the other Chaosverses have all been formed. This one, however, has not.”

“Everything is possible within the Infinite Void,” the horned man said.

“It is developing quite slowly,” Ning said with a smile. “Judging from what I saw when I inverted time, this place must have begun to accumulate matter ever since that great explosion had occurred.

However... despite all that time having passed, it still can't even come close to comparing to our Chaosverses. In my homeland, generally speaking the slower something grows, the more terrifying it will become when it finally matures."

The horned man's heart trembled, but his face remained calm. "Oh?"

"I'm not lying to you," Ning smiled. Indeed. The legends of 'Nezha' had him in his mother's womb for three years and six months before being born. Ning's own daughter, Brightmoon, had been in the womb for five years and two months before emerging.

"I have the feeling that this universe is taking shape far too slowly... and it is located exactly where the original landmass was." Ning chuckled. "It might grow to become even more powerful than our Chaosverses." Ning was connecting all the dots together.

"Impossible. That landmass completely blew apart. Most of its matter came to form our nine Chaosverses. The remaining amount of matter couldn't possibly form a stronger universe," the horned man said confidently.

"Makes sense." Ning glanced at the horned man, then drew a Northmoon sword from his back.

Clink! The sword sliced through the Infinite Void, radiating a sharp light as it chopped down at the slowly-growing universe.

"Stop that!" The horned man immediately reached out, his arm expanding tremendously as he blocked Ning's sword-light.

The two attacks collided. The horned man's robes tore apart, revealing a skinny but incomparably tough right arm which was completely undamaged.

"What are you doing, Ji Ning?" the horned man asked angrily.

"Destroying it, of course," Ning said.

"It is a perfectly fine universe which poses no threat to us at all. Why are you going to destroy it?" the horned man asked.

“At first, I was just curious about it, since it was located where the original landmass was and grew very slowly. As I said, in own homeland, the slower something develops the more powerful it becomes... but when you kept on rebutting what I said, I had the feeling that something was wrong. I thought I’d give it a try, and as I thought, you moved to block me.” Ning chuckled.

The horned man instantly felt regret upon hearing this. He wanted Ning to feel that this was nothing more than an ordinary universe, but instead he had put Ning on his guard. It must be remembered that Ning’s avatar had exited his Chaosverse filled with suspicion towards anything and everything which could be a threat to it. He had the feeling that this small universe was rather unusual; testing it out was a very normal reaction. For the horned man to stop him meant that something was afoot. If the horned man didn’t stop him? Well, destroying a celestial object which held no life didn’t really matter.

Whoosh! The golden-robed Ning once more charged towards that Chaosverse, chopping out with his divine sword.

“Don’t! I’ll tell you the secret!” the horned man called out hurriedly while blocking. “I discovered this by accident over many years of observation. If any other Chaoslords arise in the future, don’t tell them this secret! This universe is very unique in many ways. Although it isn’t that large, it is quite marvelous. Let me explain!”

No amount of honeyed words could dissuade Ning!

“BREAK!” Ning’s eyes flickered with destructive light. He manifested three heads and six arms, each of his hands holding onto a Northmoon sword. Sword-light flashed in an utterly indomitable matter as he summoned the vast power of his entire Chaosverse. The horned man grew quite desperate. Darknorth was an Omega Autarch of the Sword, the most offensive type of Omega Autarch. Alphan would be able to withstand Ning’s attack, but there was no way he could completely negate it and prevent any of it from harming the small universe.

“Gwaaaar!” The horned man suddenly changed form, becoming an

incomparably vast and muscular black bull. Beneath the bull's hooves appeared the enormous diagram of a Yin-Yang.

"It is you? The Sentinel for the third universe, 'Autarch Yin-Yang'?" Ning recognized this form. So the horned man was actually one of the 129 Omega Autarchs who had surrounded and assaulted the black-robed emperor! "You didn't die?"

The bull had clearly died in the images Ning had seen during the temporal inversion. Ning instantly realized that a grand secret had to be connected to this.

"Damnit!" The old black bull grew even more panicked and angry. "So long as I'm here, you can forget about destroying it!"

Boom! Boom! Boom! The golden-robed Ning began to battle against the old black bull next to that new universe. The shockwaves from this battle blasted out in every direction. The old black bull had been alive since the ancient era, and his body had been tempered and forged to become the most terrifying machine warbeast possible.

As for Ning, he was an Omega Autarch of the Sword, well-suited to combat and slaughter. More importantly, he wasn't trying to attack the black bull. He was trying to destroy the universe. The Sithe Chaoslord had been willing to reveal his identity in order to protect that universe, which made Ning all the more aware of its importance.

"Don't destroy it! It will bring many benefits!" the black bull tried to dissuade Ning.

"Break for me!" Ning continued to launch berserk attacks. He poured an enormous amount of energy into his Northmoon swords. Now that they had been reforged, they had a function akin to the Stele of Mountains and Rivers, allowing him to unleash desperation attacks of tremendous power.

The old black bull suddenly felt a sense of danger which caused him to blanche. He had been the one to give Iyerre the Stele of Mountains and Rivers. Now, it was coming back to bite him!

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Six absolutely horrifying

streaks of destructive sword-light pierced through the void. The old black bull was unable to completely block them, and so he could do nothing but watch in agony.

Five streaks of sword-light tore into that universe. The universe was quite weak and not yet fully-formed. This desperation attack from a Lord of Chaos caused its incomplete Quintessence to be completely torn apart, resulting in the universe shuddering and beginning to crumble.

“N-no...!” the old black howled angrily. He returned to his first, azure-robed form and stared at the scene before him in despair. “Why? Why did you have to destroy it?!” the horned man stared at Ning.

“I don’t care how ‘marvelous’ it will become in the future. Now that I’ve destroyed it, it will never pose a threat,” Ning said. “There’s no need for you to say too many things to me. I won’t trust you no matter what you say. Who knows if you are telling the truth or not? The only thing I know is that I will destroy any and all threats to my home. That way, there won’t be another senseless war in the future. I’m satisfied with being a Lord of Chaos. I don’t have any ambition of invading other Chaosverses and conquering them. All I want to do is safeguard my own home.”

After speaking, Ning turned and departed.

The horned man stared as the golden-robed Ning left, filled with utter agony. Back within the Sithe Chaosverse, his true body was holding onto a stone tablet which had the words ‘World’ and ‘Set’ on them.

“During the last era, we failed at the very end. The entire landmass was destroyed, but I was lucky enough to acquire the deceased emperor’s ‘Worldsetter Stele’. I hid a fragment of my truesoul within it, and as a result I managed to survive. I was delivered into a Chaosverse and ended up becoming its Lord of Chaos.” The horned bull was in a state of utter agony. “Once that growing universe became truly complete, it could become one with the Worldsetter Stele. When that happened, I would have a chance of ascending to...”

“It’s gone. It’s all gone.” The horned man gradually began to calm down. What was done was done. There was no way to reverse it.

“Perhaps I was being too stubborn. I am a Lord of Chaos and completely invincible in the Infinite Void. Why do I have to become even more powerful?” The horned man gradually came to his senses. He had been enslaved for so long during the previous era that he had an almost maniacal desire to become stronger, to stand at the top and rule others so that none would ever rule him again.

But this was a new era, an era that was different from the previous era. When Ning destroyed that budding universe, it meant that the old landmass would never be reborn. He had lost his chance... but as a result, he was now truly free.

“I’m free now. There’s nothing left to fight over.” The horned man began to fly back towards his own Chaosverse. “No ambition... only wishes to safeguard his own home... Desolate... Ji Ning? Mm. A Chaoslord like him is decent company.”

.....

Ning’s golden-robed avatar established an estate within the Infinite Void. It would permanently reside here, occasionally going out and wandering about. He couldn’t guarantee that no dangers would appear, but he would do his utmost to protect his home.

Within the Desolate Chaosverse.

The white-robed Ning stood there within empty space, flanked by Autarch Bolin and Autarch Ekong.

“Come back, brother Titanos.” Ning smiled. Instantly, countless specks of light began to appear. Ning was virtually omnipotent within his own Chaosverse. He had been able to see everything within Autarch Titanos’ truesoul, and thus he was able to remake it out of the void and call it back.

An old man with two fleshy antennae on his head slowly began to appear.

“What just happened to me?!” Autarch Titanos stared at Ning, Ekong, and Bolin in shock. “Darknorth, y-you... didn’t I die? Wasn’t my truesoul devoured?”

“Calm down,” Bolin laughed.

“Wait a while,” Ekong said.

Ning smiled as well. “Give me just a few moments, brother Titanos.” As he spoke, countless flecks of light began to assemble next to him yet again. This time, they resolved into Autarch Mogg. Next came Autarch Stonerule and Autarch Skyfeeder. After that came the refined, relaxed Autarch Awakener... and last came the ancient-looking Autarch Entropos.

All eight Autarchs had been gathered together. The eight Autarchs who had arisen within the Desolate Chaosverse had finally been reunited.

“This is Darknorth.” Autarch Bolin made the introductions, a smile on his face. “He trained in the Omega Sword Dao and used it to reach Omega Autarchy, binding our entire Chaosverse to himself. As a result, he was able to bring you all back.”

“Brother Darknorth?” Autarch Entropos stared at Ning, wide-eyed. Autarch Awakener felt rather curious, as he felt a close connection between himself and Ning.

“Actually, it can be said that Autarch Awakener helped guide me on my path,” Ning laughed.

They began to chat amongst themselves. All of them were amazed at the twists and turns of fate. They had died, and yet they were now back! The guidance which Autarch Awakener has provided to Ning had been critically important. Without his guidance, Ning probably wouldn’t have been able to understand the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. And now, after becoming a Lord of Chaos, Ning was able to revive Autarch Awakener. It was all so interesting.

“Gentlemen, far too many of our Hegemons and Emperors have died during the two wars we fought. They fought to the death for the sake of our entire Chaosverse. I have to bring them all back as well,” Ning laughed.

Boom! The entire Chaosverse seemed to tremble.

“W-what just happened to me?”

“Didn’t I die?”

“Where am I?”

Hegemons and Emperors began to come back to life throughout the Chaosverse, all of them rather stunned. Their final memories were of the moments before their deaths. Ning had viewed the past of this entire Chaosverse and knew each and every Hegemon and Emperor. He revived everyone who had died in battle, including the ones he recognized such as his own disciple, ‘Green Bamboo’ Yang Quding. He also revived some of the friends he had encountered when wandering the Chaosverse after failing his Daomerge.

Many powerful experts had all been brought back.

“Darknorth... will such a large-scale resurrection be bad for this Chaosverse?” Autarch Titanos asked.

“Don’t worry,” Ning laughed. “Even after being revived, they remain a part of the Chaosverse. The actual amount of energy which has been permanently lost due to the revival process is quite low. For example, reviving the six of you cost roughly the amount of energy a single Autarch contains within him. Reviving all these Hegemons and Emperors didn’t cost too much at all. I can handle it with ease.”

It really mattered very little. Iyerre’s death alone had granted their Chaosverse more than a hundred Autarchs worth of power.

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After chatting with the eight Autarchs, Ning departed and went back to the Three Realms. Ning’s emotions towards the Three Realms were the deepest of all.

Nuwa, Subhuti, Maitreya, Kuafu, Crazy Ji... all of them had received mental messages from Ning. They were his old friends, and now all of them were standing by his side.

“Return to us.” With but a thought, Ning brought back the Three Realms of old. Countless specks of light began to gather, resulting in countless figures emerging within it. These were the Immortals and Fiendgods of the

Three Realms who had died in the Endwar against Old Man Yuan and the Seamless Gate, as well as those who had died even earlier. Daoist Three Purities, Lord Tathagata the Buddha, Buddha Jueming, Sui ren, Shennong, Fuxi, Lord Everwood, senior apprentice-brother Houyi, Gonggong, Daoist Threelives...

Countless Immortals and Fiendgods were brought back to life. Many friends were reunited.

Tathagata, Maitreya, Ananda... these old friends of the Buddhist Sangha all gathered together. As for the Daoist Way? Three Purities, Daofather Carefree, Lu Dongbin, and the others all gathered together as well, with those who had survived the Endwar narrating what had happened afterwards.

Too many people. Too many stories. All of them had been brought back to life.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Houyi held Chang’e by the hand, walking over to stand before Ning. “Thank you.”

“Haha. Eldest apprentice-brother, spend some time chatting with my sister-in-law. Don’t waste any time on me,” Ning laughed.

“Master.” Ning walked over to Daoist Threelives, who looked rather hesitant even though the big yellow bear next to him nodded encouragingly. Daoist Threelives was normally a very straightforward and heroic figure, but when he spoke to Subhuti and his other old friends he quickly learned just how incredible Ji Ning was. Ji Ning was someone completely omnipotent, capable of controlling life and death, and able to link past, present, and future together. And... Ji Ning was his disciple? Although he was nominally Ning’s master, this was their first time actually meeting each other.

“Uh. Hi there, Darknorth,” Daoist Threelives said rather hesitantly. This was their first meeting, and the two didn’t really share the relationship which a master and disciple should. This was something which took time.

Ning didn’t try to force things. He turned, staring off into the distance. All the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms had been brought

back to life. They were all reunited now, sharing their stories with each other. It would be years before things calmed down.

Ning immediately retreated, vanishing without a trace.

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Ning arrived back at the Black-White College of Stillwater Province, located within the Grand Xia major world of the Three Realms. Since Ning had remade the entire Three Realms with his will alone, the Grand Xia was currently devoid of life.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ning walked over to the Dao Debate Palace of the Black-White College. He had left her for last. She was going to be revived by herself.

“Come back to me, senior apprentice-sister.”

Countless specks of light began to appear. They appeared unspeakably beautiful and graceful, and they gathered together into the form of the young, black-robed Yu Wei. As more and more truesoul fragments gathered, life appeared within Yu Wei’s eyes. She stared at Ning, who looked back into the eyes of his senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei.

The white-robed Ning and the black-robed Yu Wei simply stared at each other in silence. As the final piece of her truesoul fragment returned, Yu Wei regained all of her memories and she began to emit the aura of true life.

“Junior apprentice-brother?” Yu Wei couldn’t believe it. Her final memories were of the war-torn Three Realms and her death at the hands of the Godking.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ning stepped forward, gently taking his wife into his arms. He simply held her, inhaling into her hair and smelling her sweet fragrance. This scent had become a dusty memory that had lain dormant for many years. Ning felt intoxicated by it. He had trained and fought and bled for so long, but it was all worth it. This single instant... it surpassed all of eternity.

Yu Wei hugged Ning back. She was still rather confused. Her memories

had 'jumped' from her death in the Three Realms war to the present day. She didn't know what Ning had experienced, but she knew that Ning must have made many, many sacrifices in order to bring her back to life.

Finally Ning released Yu Wei, but he continued to hold her by the hand. He pointed at the area around them. "Senior apprentice-sister, remember this?"

"Of course I do. This is the Dao Debate Palace. We had a little competition here, and you lost," Yu Wei teased. Suddenly, she couldn't help but ask, "Junior apprentice-brother... can you tell me what has happened?"

"Let's sit down and talk it over." Ning pulled Yu Wei over to sit down atop a dais before the Dao Debate Palace, then began to explain. "During that battle, you were killed by the Godking..."

Ning talked for a long, long time. He narrated the end of the war for the Three Realms, his journey to the Badlands Territory, his abduction by Hegemon Brightshore, and even his adventure into that otherverse. He explained how he came to understand the Omega Sword Dao and then used it to become a Daolord of the First Step, Second Step...

He told of his adventures in the Terror Starsea, of how he fought to acquire a Voidsea Jade seal within the Waveshift Realm, of his battles against Archons of the Sacred Cities, and even him acquiring the Flamewing God and then begging Autarch Titanos to bring her back to life.

"I was heartbroken when I failed in that attempt." Ning pointed towards an area up ahead. "I got completely drunk, right over there. I fell asleep on the snow."

With but a thought, Ning caused snow to flutter down around them. Ning and Yu Wei gazed at the beautiful snowscape, while Ning said with a smile, "It's actually quite odd. I was heartbroken, which is why the snow fell... but now when I see the snow, I feel very happy."

Yu Wei didn't say anything. She just tightly held onto Ning's hand. She herself felt heart-aching pain ever since Ning had begun his tale.

Ning continued to narrate his story. “Afterwards, I attempted the Daomerge. Unfortunately, I failed.” He explained of his hunt for Nuwa, his meeting with the five Autarchs, and how he had gone into the Sithelands to save the Paragon of Pills. He told of how he had found the [Five Truncheon Chapters] within that hidden world, and in the end managed to complete the [Void Everlasting] technique which gave him an imperishable truesoul. He told her of how he had become an Omega Emperor, and of the war which the Sithe had unleashed.

“We won that final battle. I broke through and took the final step on my path.” Ning smiled as he looked at Yu Wei. “We won, and so everything I wanted became real. All my old friends came back to life... and of course, so did you.”

Yu Wei looked at Ning. She truly couldn’t imagine how Ning could’ve experienced so many things since her death in the Three Realms. It had been just a blink of an eye for her. She felt pained at all he had suffered.

“Look.” Ning pointed forwards. In front of the Dao Debate Palace, a plum blossom suddenly emerged from the fallen snow, releasing its sweet fragrance as it bloomed.

“In my past life on Earth, there was a saying in my homeland: ‘Only after enduring the bone-chilling cold shall you smell the fragrance of the plum blossom.’” Ning laughed loudly. “I’ve endured the bone-chilling cold. Now, I finally can smell the fragrance of the plum blossom.” As he spoke, he pressed his nose against Yu Wei’s face and gave her a sniff, then said in an absolutely shameless manner, “Mm, plum blossom. It smells so good.”

The plum blossoms continued to emerge from the snow before the Dao Debate Palace. As for Ning and Yu Wei, they continued to sit there atop the dais. They had so many stories to share with each other, including stories of their daughter. Ning had many things he wanted to tell her, and Yu Wei wanted to hear them all.

.....

The Three Realms. A great banquet, the likes of which had never been seen before, was being hosted here on this day. Lord of Chaos Ji Ning, also

known as Autarch Darknorth, was personally hosting this banquet. The eight Autarchs and countless Hegemons and Emperors who had fought in the war had all been teleported here by Ning to take part in this feast. This was also a victory feast for them, after having won the war.

Ning was seated at the highest position, while his wife Yu Wei was next to him. To each side of them were the eight Autarchs.

Below them, there was no further division of rank. It was a veritable sea of Hegemons and Emperors! As for Subhuti, Nuwa, Brightmoon, and the other leaders of the Three Realms, they had a section all their own.

Many major powers used this banquet to discuss the Dao with each other, and there was much merry-making and rejoicing. Many of the cultivators brought painters, musicians, and other talented entertainers to spread joy amongst each other!

“I never imagined that this day would come,” Buddha Ksitigarbha said with a smile.

“And I never would’ve thought that I’d have a disciple like Autarch Darknorth! I never even taught him!” Daoist Threelives roared happily while drinking some wine.

“Okay, now you are just blatantly showing off,” Crimsonbright remarked.

“So what if I am?” Daoist Threelives mock-glared at him.

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Houyi and Chang’e were seated together. Houyi no longer looked like the quiet, forlorn woodcutter of old. His spirit and bravado had been aroused once more.

On the other side were ‘Azure Bamboo’ Yang Quding and Hegemon Dawnclear, who were together again.

The first pair belonged to the ‘Three Realms Alliance’, while the second pair included Ning’s personal disciple. They were all seated close to each other, and both duos smiled and nodded at each other.

.....

“So you are Brightshore? I heard you actually abducted Autarch Darknorth long ago?”

By now, Hegemon Brightshore was a famous man. There were many Hegemons and Emperors who wished to befriend him. He chortled, “Haha, yes. I have to say, I was lucky. Who would’ve thought that when I swallowed that batch of cultivators, I would end up abducting the man who would become Autarch Darknorth? Haha. It was luck! Luck!”

.....

“I’m telling you guys, me and Darknorth are like brothers! I could tell from the very first moment I saw him that he was something special.” Ninedust was busy bragging to the other Hegemons and Emperors.

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The Paragon of Pills and her ‘big brother’ were together, beaming happily as they took part in the feast. When their gazes met with Ning’s, both sides raised their goblets in toasts.

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It was a truly grand celebration with oceans of food and drink. The Immortals and Fiendgods all made merry in this truly unprecedented gathering, while the major powers who put on performances did their utmost to please.

Ning and Yu Wei sat up high, staring down at the many cultivators below them. Ning saw his father Ji Yichuan, his mother Yuchi Snow, his daughter Ji Brightmoon, and her Dao-companion Stonepool. He saw Uncle White, Autumn Leaf, Little Qing, and many other friends from his earliest days. He saw all the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms, and the countless major powers he had encountered on his path.

“Alphan... Sithe...” Ning silently shook his head. “What’s the point of fighting? Being strong enough to protect those we care about is enough.”

Ning turned, his gaze intersecting with Yu Wei’s. “I want to kiss you,”

Ning said.

“There’s too many people here!” Yu Wei was shocked. “No way. No way! Wait for the feast to be over.”

“Don’t be afraid. Your husband is the Lord of Chaos. So long as I will it, they won’t see a thing.” Ning lowered his head, burying himself in Yu Wei’s lips.

*

RWX's Thoughts

This is the end of the novel. Click on 'next chapter' to see a final afterword from both author IET and translator RWX!

Afterword

Whew. It's over. Nearly two and a half years have passed, starting from Dec 16, 2012 until today, April 10, 2015. Our journey through the [Desolate Era] is finally over. The enormous [Desolate Era] started with our Ji Ning stumbling through the Netherworld Kingdom into his next reincarnated life, and now we can finally put a final period on this story.

This is the seventh novel which Tomatoes has written. [Legend of the Astral Peaks], [Inch of Radiance], [Stellar Transformations], [Coiling Dragon], [The Nine Cauldrons], [Swallowed Star] came before it. This has been the seventh.

[Desolate Era] has had games and anime made based off of it, with the first episode of the anime already released. It was a bit slow at first due to a lack of familiarity, but starting from the third episode it should speed up quickly. It should stabilize at roughly an episode a week and will continue to be broadcast. A TV series is about to start shooting as well, and it'll go on satellite television. We're also preparing for a movie, but [Desolate Era] will require a large amount of investment and so it will be a while in the coming.

Whew. Two and a half years. Haha, two and a half years is a very long period of time! My son was born, and now he can actually recite poetry. I'm speechless.

As for this novel I spent two and a half years writing? At first, everything was so smooth and easy. I was fired up and filled with energy, and the letters just kept flowing. However, towards the middle/late parts of the novel, I was just too tired, especially after I went past 2 million characters. I felt as though I was a marathon runner who had reached his limit and at the verge of collapse. I worked until very late at night, every night, burning the midnight oil and tearing my hair out to think about what to write. Sometimes I couldn't even be bothered to shower. I was a man possessed.

I was most tired during the latter half of last year. The pressure was tremendous, and the need to write two chapters a day resulted in the plot

being imperfect. I tried to force myself to think and to post new chapters, and I nearly went mad from it all. There were several times, late at night last year, where I felt my heartrate speeding up so rapidly that I thought that I might die at any moment. I managed to force myself to last until January, at which point I gritted my teeth and said 'Screw it', slowing down to one chapter a day.

This made things much easier for me. My mental energies quickly began to recover, and I feel as though my physical conditioning has improved by 50%, haha.

I poured my blood, sweat, and tears into [Desolate Era]. It feels like part of my life itself. Now that I'm done writing it, I feel relaxed. Finally, I can take a long break... but at the same time, I feel a bit reluctant to part with it. My emotions are quite complicated.

No matter what, [Desolate Era] is over! This book is done, and I had a smile on my face as I wrote the grand finale.

Mm. As for what's next? A new book, of course!

The new book will be set in a strange and mysterious continent. It'll be a completely different type of book, one which I've never written before. In fact, the cultivation system within it will be unlike any other I've worked on! Haha. I've been a novel writer for nearly ten years, after all. I need to find my breakthrough! All I want to say is that I'll use all of my emotions to write this new novel, pouring all of my ardor into it.

But of course... now that I've finished [Desolate Era], I'm going to completely relax and empty my mind for a time, then prepare for a new book. I'll give myself two months of rest, then officially start the next book on June 15th!

For news on my next book as well for some super secret updates, you can all pay attention to my public 'WeChat' account. I'll keep it updated with news. All you need to do is search for '我吃西红柿' or 'fanqie34' and you'll be able to add me.

Alrighty then. Everything's ok now. The world of [Desolate Era] has come to an end. The next time we meet, it'll be in the world of my new

book. See you all on June 15th!

Tomatoes,

The evening of June 10th, Yangzhou City.

*

RWX's Afterword:

Whew. Wow. Yikes. Woooooow!

This is the third IET novel that I have worked on (with Coiling Dragon and Desolate Era being solely translated by myself). I agree with author IET that '2.5 years is a very long period of time'; I spent just as much time translating DE as he did writing it, and in fact I've been translating his novels from 2014 to 2018! That's an even longer period of time.

I want to thank each and every reader, commenter, donor, sponsor, and friend

who has supported this translation. Like IET, it's been a very long and exhausting process and I'm both filled with joy that it's over but also nostalgia and a bit of reluctance to part with it. However, 'there is no party that goes on forever'; 天下没有不散的筵席. I've translated in sickness and in health (I was actually in the hospital just earlier today due to a severe fever), through breakups and through makeups, and all the other things that can happen over the course of such a long period of time. Now, Ji Ning's story has finally come to an end. As IET notes in his April 2015 afterword, there is also a live-action adaptation of DE coming shortly (theoretically in the next month or so) and we'll be sure to announce it as well! We were originally going to have a short video by IET as well, but he couldn't quite fit it in his schedule. We'll post it as a separate announcement later.

There have been so many memories that have built up over the years, and I've talked and interacted with so many of you that I genuinely view you as friends and family. My keenest memory is of a 'Daolord' on Patreon who deleted his pledge... or rather, his brother did. When his brother deleted the pledge, he added a note: 'Thanks for translating, but my big bro

just passed away and I'm cutting his pledges :(Thanks for understanding, he failed his Daomerge' I damn near broke down on the spot. I hope that all of you and your loved ones are as hale and hearty as you were when you first started Desolate Era, and that you will continue to be so many, many years in the future!

So what will I be doing next? Well, five years translating one specific author is more than enough, even one that I cherish as much as IET; for newcomers, it was my translation of Coiling Dragon which inaugurated the launch of Wuxiaworld! In addition to maintaining the site and handling company matters like licenses, copyright, etc., I'll be doing two things in specific - I'll be announcing tomorrow the relaunch of Godsfall Chronicles working with Xiao Lai (we have ten chapters ready!), and when I have a sufficient stockpile I'll launch Dragon Talisman on Wuxiaworld! I said before that I viewed Godsfall Chronicles as one of the most novel-quality webnovels out there, and I stand by that belief. As for Dragon Talisman, it has a very refreshingly kind-hearted main character and a world which is steeped deep in Chinese lore and history, which I will endeavor to make as accessible as possible. These are two spectacular novels, and I hope to gain the same support and love as I've had from you in the past :D.

1:08 AM, April 21st of 2018, Chengdu City.

Credits

Translator: [Iewatermelons](#)

Epub: [Estevam](#) / [dotNOVEL](#)